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ABSTRACT

This booklet discusses how to improve girls' education drawing on lessons from experience and proposing action for the future. In spite of significant international mobilization in favor of women and their rights to education, much remains to be done. While girls' enrollment has increased, gender inequalities persist at all levels of education, becoming even more pronounced at higher levels. This low level of education and training for women hinders economic efficiency and growth and placed limitations on any measures taken to reduce poverty. The booklet is addressed to government officials, education planners, and policymakers and explains why they have to act on gender in education. It present the different measures that can be taken to increase female participation and outlines the kind of specific strategies that can be employed in different regions. It emphasizes the need to mobilize and coordinate a variety of actors, in the school system, in the home, in the community, in the private sector, in the media and in the different government agencies at various levels. (Contains 48 references.) (DFR)

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Fundamentals of Educational Planning

56

Increasing girls' and women's participation in basic education

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Nelly P. Stromquist

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Fundamentals of educational planning

The booklets in this series are written primarily for two types of clientele: those engaged in educational planning and administration, in developing as well as developed countries; and others, less specialized, such as senior government officials and policy-makers who seek a more general understanding of educational planning and of how it is related to overall national development. They are intended to be of use either for private study or in formal training programmes.

Since this series was launched in 1967 practices and concepts of educational planning have undergone substantial change. Many of the assumptions which underlay earlier attempts to rationalise the process of educational development have been criticised or abandoned. Even if rigid mandatory centralized planning has now clearly proven to be inappropriate, this does not mean that all forms of planning have been dispensed with. On the contrary, the need for collecting data, evaluating the efficiency of existing programmes, undertaking a wide range of studies, exploring the future and fostering broad debate on these bases to guide educational policy and decision-making has become even more acute than before.

The scope of educational planning has been broadened. In addition to the formal system of education, it is now applied to all other important educational efforts in non-formal settings. Attention to the growth and expansion of educational systems is being complemented and sometimes even replaced by a growing concern for the quality of the entire educational process and for the control of its results. Finally, planners and administrators have become more and more aware of the importance of implementation strategies and of the role of different regulatory mechanisms in this respect: the choice of financing methods, the examination and certification procedures or various other regulation

and incentive structures. The concern of planners is twofold: to reach a better understanding of the validity of education in its own empirically observed specific dimensions and to help in defining appropriate strategies for change.

The purpose of these booklets includes monitoring the evolution and change in educational policies and their effect upon educational planning requirements; highlighting current issues of educational planning and analysing them in the context of their historical and societal setting; and disseminating methodologies of planning which can be applied in the context of both the developed and the developing countries.

In order to help the Institute identify the real up-to-date issues in educational planning and policy-making in different parts of the world, an Editorial Board has been appointed, composed of two general editors and associate editors from different regions, all professionals of high repute in their own field. At the first meeting of this new Editorial Board in January 1990, its members identified key topics to be covered in the coming issues under the following headings:

1. Education and development.
2. Equity considerations.
3. Quality of education.
4. Structure, administration and management of education.
5. Curriculum.
6. Cost and financing of education.
7. Planning techniques and approaches.
8. Information systems, monitoring and evaluation.

Each heading is covered by one or two associate editors.

The series has been carefully planned but no attempt has been made to avoid differences or even contradictions in the views expressed by the authors. The Institute itself does not wish to impose any official doctrine. Thus, while the views are the responsibility of the authors and may not always be shared by UNESCO or the IIEP, they warrant attention in the international forum of ideas. Indeed, one of the purposes of this series is to reflect a diversity of experience and opinions by giving different authors from a wide range of backgrounds

and disciplines the opportunity of expressing their views on changing theories and practices in educational planning.

The present booklet addresses the issue of how to increase girls' education: lessons from experience and action for the future. Many things have been written on this subject in the last decade thanks to the organization of four world conferences on women in Mexico City (1975); Copenhagen (1980); Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995). Yet, in spite of this significant international mobilization in favour of women and their rights to education, much remains to be done. Girls' enrolment has certainly increased but gender inequalities persist at all levels of education; they even become more pronounced at higher levels. The low level of education and training of women hinders economic efficiency and growth. It also places limitations on any measures taken to reduce poverty.

This booklet is addressed to government officials, educational planners and policy-makers and explains to them why they have to act on gender in education. It presents in a clear way the different measures that can be taken to increase female participation in education, outlining the kind of specific strategies that can be envisaged in different regions. In addition to listing such measures, the booklet provides a very useful description of the process by which they could bear more fruit. It emphasizes the need to mobilize and co-ordinate a variety of actors, in the school system, in the home, in the community, in the private sector, in the media and in the different government agencies and at various levels. It is the coalition of the action of all of these actors which will allow things to start really moving on the ground. The Institute is very grateful to Professor Stromquist for this very useful and challenging contribution.

Jacques Hallak
Assistant Director-General, UNESCO
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Preface

Several United Nations World Conferences have brought women's rights to the forefront of the stage and succeeded in convincing national policy-makers that there are very high benefits to be gained from girls' and women's education. An educated woman is likely to have fewer and healthier children; she will encourage her own children to become educated, thus making it possible for the next generation to learn and make a better contribution to society. A better educated women is also more able to earn a living for herself and her family. In the poorest regions of the world, where women are traditionally heavily engaged in agricultural production and informal sector activities, developing women's education and training is likely to be a very powerful way of fighting against poverty.

In spite of the present international mobilization in favour of women's education, much remains to be done. In 1993, two-thirds of the world's illiterates were women and 70 per cent of all eligible children out of primary school were girls. In spite of definite progress in the number of girls enrolled, the gender differential persists in many countries and, all in all, girls are still less likely to be enrolled than boys. They have less access to school and often drop out earlier. Continuous mobilization needs to be achieved at national level.

This booklet, prepared by Professor Nelly Stromquist, is intended to provide knowledge, guidance and inspiration to planners and policy-makers committed to increasing the participation of girls and women in education in their country and to reducing inequalities between gender. After analysing the extent of the disparities in different regions and the educational conditions facing men and women, it reviews the different measures and strategies which have been designed and tried out in different countries to increase and improve girls' education.

These range from expanding the supply in formal education but also in non formal education to revising the curriculum, making it more gender sensitive, modifying the content, the textbooks and the teaching methods, or to providing various incentives to both teachers and

students. These measures and many others are discussed. To break the vicious circle of poverty, whereby illiterate mothers bring up illiterate daughters who will marry early, and be maintained in an inferior social position due to the pressure of the various cultural norms and regulations, more than a few educational interventions are necessary. Actions on the overall environment are required which have to do with improving the economic, social and health conditions of the community as well as with increasing the level of awareness of women themselves so as to allow them to develop a sense of control over their own lives.

This booklet presents the various possible strategies, stressing that not one single measure will single-handedly bring about change; it also sketches out the main priorities by geographical region. The most appropriate measures in African countries are not necessarily the most adequate ones in an Asian country or in an Arab State. Within a country itself, from one region to another, from one culture to another, the same measures might not be similarly effective. More research action is hence required to identify the best strategies.

A major strength of the booklet is its emphasis on the need to develop a holistic approach, calling on the cooperation of as many players as possible: it is the coalition of the action of teachers, head teachers, NGOs, community leaders, women's organizations and various health and economic experts at the local level, with that of curriculum specialists, teacher trainers, universities and researchers, and last but not least, different government agencies and politicians which may make a difference. The process for introducing change is thus as important as are the measures themselves.

In writing this booklet Professor Nelly P. Stromquist does not pretend to be neutral. In this area some advocacy is in order. Professor Stromquist has written several books on the education and the training of girls for Unicef, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and the World Bank and is the most qualified person to write such a booklet. The Editorial Board is very grateful to her for her valuable contribution to our series.

Françoise Caillods
Co-General Editor
IIEP

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Introduction

The growing theoretical understanding of national development as well as empirical comparisons between industrialized and developing countries clearly reveals that equality between the sexes is one of the major foundations for effective social organization, productivity, and humanistic well-being.

The world still faces many inequalities in the educational field, stemming from residence (urban vs. rural populations), gender, race, and ethnic affiliation. Globally, school systems have not yet been able to satisfy the demand, and by any criterion the number of children out of school is excessive. In 1995 about 400 million school-age children (from 6-17 years old) did not have access to primary or secondary education.

In this booklet we will concentrate on inequalities due to gender. The term 'gender' is employed here, and increasingly elsewhere, to highlight that inequalities affecting women are a consequence of asymmetrical relations between women and men, a product of differential power and circumstances, not merely a condition affecting women. Gender inequalities are suffered by nearly all women, but some inequalities are greater among poor and rural women. These groups are more likely to be illiterate, not to have access to public education, to drop out early from schooling, not to benefit from training programmes, and to be relatively absent at the university level. Nonetheless, all women – regardless of social class, ethnicity, and race – face inequalities because all societies have developed ingrained expectations as to the roles women and men should play, and these expectations shape – and limit – women's educational aspirations, possibilities, and choices.

This booklet is intended as a resource for knowledge, guidance, and inspiration. We make the assumption that the readers who use it firmly believe that all people – women as well as men – deserve the opportunity to live full lives. And that free choice and self-determination of life-chances are crucial features of modern and democratic existence.

The reader will find various kinds of advice in this booklet – from institutional strategies to steps that can be taken at the micro-social level by individuals. The heterogeneity of points of intervention on the education system and the range of actors identified as potential change actors is no mistake; it is generated by the need to act comprehensively and pervasively in the education system and its environment. It is noted that, while many actors and strategies are identified herein, the reader will find a coherence among them. Various interventions that can be clearly justified are presented; yet, it is evident that not all of the recommendations will apply in the reader's particular case. What can be hoped in all cases, however, is that the level of awareness and reflection on gender issues increases.

Some basic concepts may be necessary to guide the discussions:

- sex: the differentiation between men and women based on (a relatively small number of specific) anatomical and physiological distinctions;
- gender: a *cultural* elaboration of differences between men and women. While definitions of masculinity and femininity take sex as a point of departure, they go much farther to create behavioural and even psychological distinctions which, upon careful analysis, are found to be largely arbitrary. Gender becomes the set of patterns of learned behaviour about what society considers appropriate for women or for men;
- gender ideologies: the more elaborate set of principles that are conveyed from generation to generation as to what men and women are, can do, and should do. These pervasive beliefs become crystallized in self-concept, stereotypes, and expectations regarding women and men. They permeate all spheres of life and are particularly enforced during the early phases of one's socialization;

- gender issues: the understanding of the relationships between women and men in society along multiple dimensions: education, work, health, wealth, etc. Gender issues provide both an understanding of the unequal conditions and problems facing women in relation to men and the identification of policies designed to improve the situation of women.

The content of this booklet is compiled in eight sections. We begin by noting the contributions of educated women to their society *(Section I)*. *Section II* describes the various educational conditions facing women and men. *Section III* presents a brief account of the factors that bring about educational change. *Section IV* refers to the strong international support in favour of women and women's education in particular. The subsequent section offers specific recommendations in areas crucial to the schooling process. *Section VI* continues the discussion of intervention, this time focusing on roles and strategies that should be considered by those in a position to influence educational directions. *Section VII* introduces the issue of monitoring and evaluation and *Section VIII* presents three useful case studies. The booklet concludes with a summary of the main issues.

Since this booklet is intended as a reference tool for practitioners, citations of the theoretical and empirical literature have been reduced to a minimum.

In presenting suggestions to improve the condition of girls' education, a special effort has been made to present problems in their own concatenated way so that the mutual influences and repercussions of values, expectations, and practices are shown in their full and complex interaction. The people who read this manual will represent countries with a broad range of development. The advice given here cannot be expected to fit everyone in the same way. Interventions will vary according to the country's level of education and extent of cultural resistance to gender. This does not mean gender will not be brought up as an issue in some countries but rather that specific understanding of obstacles and thus of suitable strategies must be recognized.

People's actions, far from being random, reflect their preconceptions, assumptions, and motives. In other words, people usually have reasons for their behaviours. As the unequal situation of women's education is addressed, it is to be remembered that altering these conditions will call for modifying the logic that many individuals employ, in society as well as within the schools, regarding women and men. The underlying logic is well understood.

I. Education as a tool for women's advancement

Education is defined in this booklet as the set of information, knowledge, messages, and representations that is conveyed to young and adult individuals of society, either via established institutions such as schools or through nonformal educational programmes and the media (Stromquist, 1994b). This broad definition is crucial for conceptual and logistical reasons. With today's advances in technological information and the penetration of the media, 'educational' influences are constant. Further, several alternative educational programmes are relying on nonformal education (NFE) methods, so they are increasingly a part of educational offerings.

The knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that women gain through education have been found to produce a series of beneficial impacts at both personal and societal levels. While the question of causality is difficult to determine as hardly any one social phenomenon has a single cause – the associations between education and other manifestations are strong.

Contributions to economic development

Educated women, no less than men, tend to be more employed and to earn more than those with less education. Women receive benefits from being educated, even though their levels of education usually have to be higher than those of men to receive the same salaries. Data at the national aggregate level indicate that there is a correlation between years of education and GNP. Moreover, countries with the smallest educational gaps between men and women have higher GNPs (King and Hill, 1993), revealing that as education is more fairly distributed among the population the productivity of a nation increases. Education also has long-term effects in improved agricultural and industrial productivity.

Contributions to social development

Educated women tend to make better decisions regarding family health, hygiene, and nutrition; thus, their children exhibit lower mortality rates. Women's level of education is a very strong predictor of fertility and contraceptive use. Every day, 250,000 persons are born in the world; if the current trend continues, by the year 2035 its population will double.

That educated women tend to delay marriage and to have fewer children reveals greater deliberation in family planning; and it reflects greater participation in household decision making. Educated women also tend to take better care of their children, with better-informed management not only of their physical well-being but also of their performance in school. Educated mothers can be a source of self-esteem in daughters and thus enable them to consider non-conventional career paths. The advantages of women's education benefit men too; at national aggregate levels there is a significant and positive association between women's education and male life expectancy (King and Hill, 1993).

The threshold – or minimum years of schooling – for education to make a difference varies depending on the quality of education, the ability of the individual, and the societal context. In general, however, it seems that between four and five years of schooling creates a level of skills and knowledge that will be sustainable. It is important, therefore, that girls not only be given access to school, but that they complete at least the primary cycle. School attendance reduces illiteracy, but to develop literate citizens' basic educational skills must be grounded in literacy practices.

Contributions to political development

Women with high levels of education are more analytical and perceptive than those who have not been exposed to systematic educational or training programmes. They tend to be less vulnerable to exaggerated political claims, to claim more of their citizenship rights, and to participate more in public elections.

Some of the changes called for here may not be viewed by all as desirable. For instance, the educated woman's tendency to participate in the labour market and thus to earn wages may be seen by her husband as a threat to his authority and to the woman's domestic role. The educated woman's propensity to have a smaller family may be seen as a threat to large families, which is a sign of virility within certain Latin-American and African cultures.

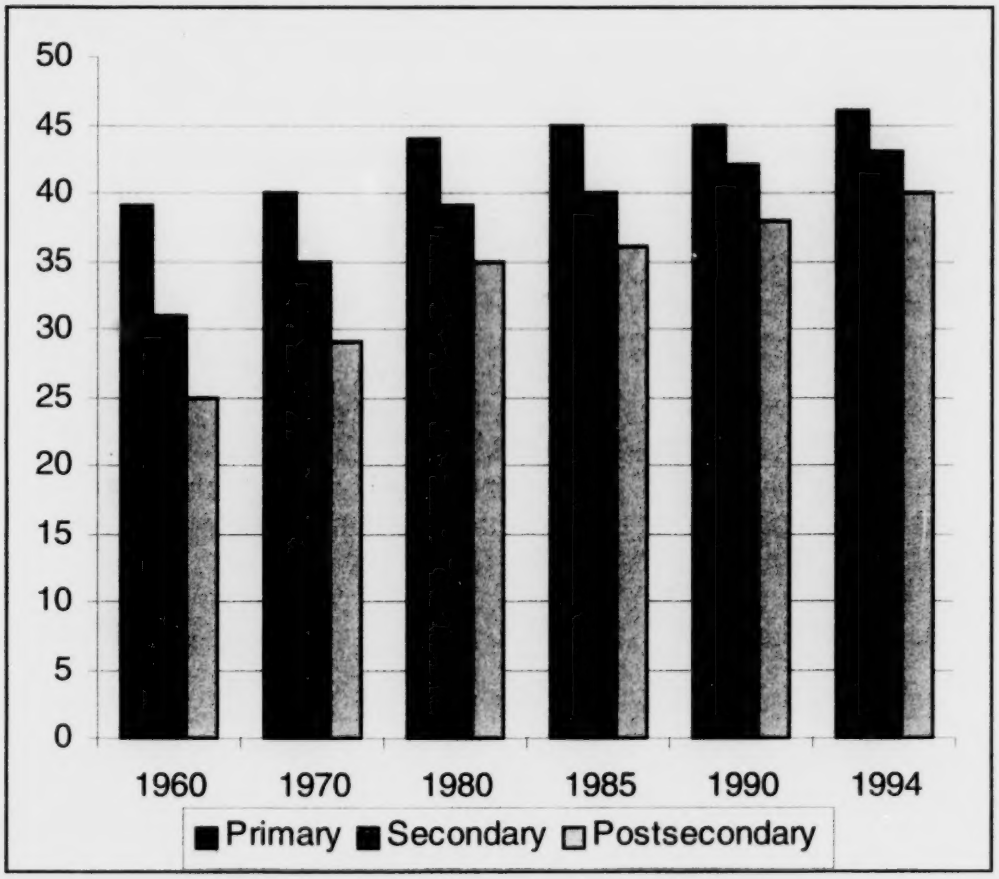
People do have different values; it is clear, however, that some of these values are imposed on women and they do not represent their own perspectives and desires. Because of social pressure, women will adopt these values, but with a deep-seated, often hidden, reluctance, unaware of or discouraged from considering alternatives.

II. Main educational conditions of women and men across developing regions

In all regions of the world there have been improvements in primary and secondary school enrolment and in adult literacy during the last 20 years. However, the educational supply is not yet able to meet the demand: large numbers of both girls and boys do not have access to schooling or are served for only a few grades. However, whether in conditions of educational scarcity or not, girls face a larger set of obstacles than do boys in both gaining access to school and completing their schooling.

Despite unambiguous individual and social benefits derived from women's literacy and education, women constitute two-thirds of the world's illiterates and two-thirds of the children out of school are girls. According to 1994 data, women are closing the gender gap at all levels of schooling in the *developed* countries, where they represent 49 per cent of enrolment in primary education, 49 per cent of the enrolment in secondary education, and 52 per cent of the enrolment in tertiary education. In *developing* countries, the situation for 1994 shows marked disparities as women represent 46 per cent of the enrolment of primary education, but only 43 and 40 per cent of the enrolment in secondary and tertiary education, respectively (UNESCO, 1996). *Graph 1* compares the percentage of female enrolment in developing countries across all three levels of education over a period of 34 years. These enrolment figures tend to present an optimistic account since they include repeaters; they mask the large number of failures in terms of students who drop out of school and do not complete their respective educational cycle.

Graph 1: Percentage of female enrolment by level of education in developing countries (1960-1994)



Source: UNESCO Statistical Year Books 1972 and 1996

In the developing regions of South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa there are sizeable gaps in literacy rates – 26 and 20 percentage points, respectively, between men and women. This is not the case for Latin America, where the regional gender gap is about 2 percentage points (UNESCO, 1995). Regional averages allow some basic comparisons between developing areas; yet, they often disguise serious disparities between countries in the same region and even in rural/urban conditions within countries. In many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, girls represent a small fraction of those enrolled in primary and secondary schools, and this proportion is even smaller in rural areas (UNESCO, 1995). Girls and women tend to be under-represented in practically all countries of the world in vocational and technical education, both at secondary and tertiary levels.

Ideological forces in many societies create and maintain notions that women and men are very different in physical, psychological, and intellectual constitution. (It is interesting, however, that arguments about gender differences in terms of mental ability are gradually being discarded.) These notions are crystallized in two major social practices: the sexual division of labour and the control of women's sexuality.

The prevailing sexual division of labour – which assigns women domestic tasks and responsibilities – results in obstacles to schooling for girls that boys do not face. Girls, particularly in poor homes, are needed to perform domestic tasks such as cooking, fetching wood and water, and helping with smaller siblings. These tasks are not the most dangerous nor the most exhausting in society, but insofar as they are performed constantly throughout the day and throughout the year, and in very confined locations, they affect people's expectations of what women are 'good for'. In general, the lower the levels of technology for access to water and fuel, the greater the domestic burden on women, thereby reducing their availability for schooling. Lower family wealth produces a similar greater domestic burden on wife and daughters. It should be clear that poverty alone does not cause women's inequality but that poverty tends to augment this inequality given the greater demand for women's and girls' labour in low-income households.

Strong beliefs that women's primary mission in life is to become mothers determines what level and type of schooling people – particularly men – deem to be appropriate for them. The women themselves internalize these beliefs and tend to see their schooling as secondary to more family-linked roles. This same belief – that women were meant to be mothers – develops conceptions about the need to control women's sexual desires and choices. Under these circumstances, a number of factors work to create obstacles for girls' schooling. Distance to schooling – not merely a physical but a psychological perception as well – may operate as a major deterrent to girls' attendance. As distances increase, so do parents' fear that their daughters risk sexual assault on the way, leading them to make pre-emptive decisions such as not sending the girls to school. The notion of motherhood is often accompanied by a notion of 'purity', which translates into ensuring the girls' virginity, while the boys are expected to have incompatible notions of their own. This objective is often accomplished by making the girls marry early; thus, the stronger a society's sexual control over women, the younger the age at which girls will marry. Unfortunately, practices of early marriage for girls usually means marriage to older men, in which case, the age difference ensures that the wife will enter a relationship of subordination that she will be unlikely to overcome. Her possibilities for further education and employment become severely limited due both to her lack of authority and the probability she will have several children.

Widespread social notions of motherhood and domestic life affect girls' career choices. Wanting to fit, girls avoid fields perceived as masculine, i.e. those with a substantial technical and scientific component or those that are distant from the home, that have hours that conflict with family routines, or require strong decision-making (e.g. political leadership, administration). This eventually results in a concentration of women in a few disciplines at the university level, their substantial under-representation in technological and scientific fields, and their concomitant occupational segregation.

In some societies, girls receive contradictory sexual messages. While boys are encouraged to develop sexual relationship with girls, the girls are expected to exercise sexual restraint, yet they are supposed to make themselves physically attractive, and society does little to offer them support or protection. This problem often emerges in many

African countries, where pregnancy is one of the most frequent reasons that girls give for dropping out of school. In Africa about 18 per cent of the female population between the ages of 15-19 gives birth each year, compared with 8 per cent in Latin America and 3 per cent in Asia among the same age group. The problem of teenage pregnancy is not limited to developing nations. In the United States of America, the second most common reason that girls drop out of high school is pregnancy.

Especially in poor families, girls represent an immediate economic asset. The girls' current high opportunity cost (of losing their contribution to domestic work) in contrast with their future benefits for the family (particularly when girls are expected to become part of their husband's family) results in educational decisions that are not beneficial to girls. These decisions are rational, except that they are based on a logic that considers women as secondary, subordinate individuals and of use to the family primarily when they are available for domestic work.

Some developing countries, primarily those in Asia, have registered impressive economic and social changes in the last decades; nonetheless, some evince little progress for women. According to UNESCO (cited in Asian Development Bank, 1994, p. 241), illiterate men in Asia declined by 14 million from 1970 to 1985 while the number of illiterate women increased by 28 million during the same period. These statistics suggest that while educational opportunities have been made available, it is the boys who have found it easier to participate in schooling. In other words, measures to enable girls to surmount family and cultural barriers do not seem to have been in place in sufficient numbers to make a significant difference.

Access

Access to schooling is usually measured in terms of enrolment rates. These rates can be either 'gross enrolment rates' – referring to all students enrolled at any particular level regardless of age, compared to the total population of the age officially expected to enrol at that level – or 'net enrolment rates,' in which case, the enrolment rate is computed by comparing enrolled students of the age expected for a particular grade with the total population of those enrolled of the age

expected for a particular grade with the total population of the same age group. Net enrolment rates are more precise, being more sensitive to repetition and overage situations that tend to inflate access to school as gross enrolment rates do.

The picture of access to schooling produced by gross enrolment rates is often misleading. Nonetheless, such indicators reveal that in several countries there are substantial gender gaps as girls represent lower proportions than boys in primary and secondary school. This situation is not uncommon in many Sub-Saharan and South-Asian countries. The use of net enrolment rates usually reveals an even greater gap between boys and girls, a phenomenon produced by the propensity to remove girls from schools if they are not promoted, become pregnant, or are needed for domestic work at home.

Educational statistics also reveal that the gender gap increases with higher levels of schooling. Thus, comparisons of the participation of university enrolment show an even lower participation of women than men. This should be seen as the consequence of a cumulative process that started in primary school and that gradually taught girls that higher education is neither as important nor as accessible to them as it is for boys. Educational gaps between boys and girls are even more marked when the students belong to racial or ethnic minorities. It is also greater in rural than in urban areas. The influence of these and other social conditions, notably race, ethnicity, and social class, has led some observers to argue that other forms of inequality are more important than gender. This is an important political issue that must be addressed. The fact that there are multiple inequalities in society does not make gender less important. The problem that women face in their countries and communities is not limited to their economic level. Rather, the women's situation in terms of socio-economic and political advancement cuts across lines of social class and ethnicity. Women represent slightly more than half of the population and thus are not a 'minority' in quantitative terms. Gender ideologies permeate society and are manifested in multiple instances of social life.

The fact that many women face additional burdens depending on ethnicity and social class should not lead to arguments of which form of discrimination is the greatest but to the design of educational programmes that are sensitive to the double and triple handicap of

these women. In Latin America, in the countries of Honduras, Brazil, and Uruguay, black women have a lower rate of school enrolment and completion than other women. In countries with significant indigenous populations, such as Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Mexico, the proportion of Indian women enrolled in primary school or who are literate is lower than the rest of the female population.

In some countries, the enrolment gap is higher by level of income than by gender, especially at high school and university levels. In most cases, the largest gap in enrolment rates occurs between urban and rural areas. Obviously, these disparities are caused by broad ranges of economic wealth and by the model of national development adopted. These dynamics are not to be ignored and should be part of an ongoing dialogue on the question of social equality and equity. But it would be a mistake to argue that gender disparities should 'wait' until other disparities are resolved.

Comparisons of school enrolment across time for any country will reveal progressively greater numbers of both boys and girls in schooling. This increase is caused fundamentally by the natural propensity of education systems to grow. As parents become educated, they want education for their children. As education spreads throughout society, higher levels of education are sought so as to be more competitive in the labour market. The greater the number of graduates in primary school, the greater the demand for secondary school, which in turns creates a greater demand for access to tertiary education. The larger the number of schools, the more that girls will be able to participate, even if their numbers may not be the same as those of boys. Educational authorities should not claim credit for increases in the schooling of girls unless they can demonstrate that these increases are accompanied by decreases in the gender gap and are the result of specific government policies rather than the outcome of the inevitable expansion of schooling.

Participation

Participation in schooling is important because it is linked to completion of a given cycle. In education, while 'years of schooling' is a common yardstick, these years are not 'units' that can be counted up in the same way as money. Completion of a given cycle is much

more important than incomplete studies with the same number of years. Incomplete primary or incomplete college education receives much less social and economic recognition than 'complete primary' or being a 'college graduate'.

Enrolment rates (either gross or net) for primary schooling suggest a much rosier picture than occurs in reality. Many students may enrol at the beginning of any academic year, yet relatively few actually complete their primary education. The large disparity between enrolment and cycle completion is characteristic of many education systems. In Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, fewer than half of the girls who enter primary school finish grade 5. At the global level, by the age of 18 girls have received 4.4 years less education than boys.

The failure to complete the primary school cycle means that many students will lose their literacy and numeracy skills, thus the educational investments in them will be lost. An indication of this 'waste' is reflected in the lack of success of some countries in their efforts to reduce illiteracy rates, despite increased access to schooling. In several countries, especially in Latin America, a substantial proportion of the 'illiterate' women (and men) are adults with a few years of schooling. Given the quality of their education and their premature withdrawal from school, these people were not able to develop a sustainable grasp of literacy and numeracy skills.

Girls have greater rates of dropout globally, except in the few cases where there is greater public demand for the labour of boys such as in the pastoral lands in Botswana and Lesotho and in the informal sectors of some large cities, such as in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Another reason for the higher 'dropout' rates of girls, notably particularly in most African countries, is the continuing policies of exclusion for pregnant girls (Gachuckia, 1994).

Rates of repetition in most countries are slightly higher for boys. This statistic does not reflect a lower ability on the part of boys but a greater willingness of families to invest in the education of sons despite their academic failure.

Achievement

While completion of a given cycle of studies is important, it is not the end in the quest for women's advancement in education. In efforts to enhance achievement, three complementary aspects should be considered:

(1) Whether girls *learn as much* as boys in the subjects open to both of them;
(2) Whether girls *learn the same subjects* boys are exposed to;
(3) Whether girls acquire *knowledge that will enable them to question or modify the inequalities* they face in society.

Some education authorities have no problem with the first point, but are reluctant to consider the second point and particularly the third point.

Although few education systems in developing countries have established national testing systems, those in operation indicate that girls perform less well than boys. Girls in developing countries show lower academic achievement at all levels of schooling, particularly in science and mathematics. Recent data for several East-African countries indicates that between 80 and 90 per cent of the girls taking the secondary school-leaving examination failed in mathematics, biology, chemistry, and physics examinations in each of the years 1990 to 1995 (FEMED, 1996). Since there is a clear trend toward equality of performance between genders in industrialized countries and girls tend to do as well as boys in mathematics, science, and reading achievement, in some instances, it is not a case of a biological limitation. The differential performance of girls in developing countries is not associated with intelligence of girls, but with reduced opportunity to learn, less prepared teachers serving girls, absence of support systems for learning, and the absence of meaningful role models (Stromquist, 1994b; Harding 1992).

Some of the differences in achievement seems due to the fact that many girls – especially those in rural areas – have access to fewer resources such as books and trained teachers. Women teachers have been found to foster less cognitive growth among students, but this association is not the result of lower capacities because they are

women, but because – as women – they had themselves received very low levels of education and training. An illuminating study, using sophisticated multivariate analysis, based in Pakistan, presents evidence how first-face correlations between gender and academic performance hide a complex chain of constraints, low access to resources, and limited social expectations (Warwick and Jatoi, 1994).

For a long time, certain skills were not taught to boys in the schools. These include cooking, child rearing, and home management. Likewise, certain skills were considered inappropriate for girls: mechanics, electricity, woodworking, metalworking. In consequence, the curriculum – even at the primary school level – separated boys and girls. Another manifestation of a separate curriculum was the type of sports fostered in boys and girls – physical activities that carried with them strong messages of what girls and boys can do. Some changes are taking place in the opening of such courses and activities to both sexes but many education systems still foster differential knowledge for girls and boys and thus play a part in the reproduction of traditional gender roles.

Women end up being absent in fields of study with serious consequences for the organization of life and access to major rewards. Women are notably absent in fields with the greatest potential for national development, such as agriculture: very few women are trained as agronomists or extension workers. Representation of women in scientific and technological fields is crucial, not only for the body-counting (to approach statistical equality) but for the contributions that the women's perspectives and experiences may make to those fields.

Schools and policy-makers emphasize cognitive outcomes (e.g. ability to read, write, do computation). Yet, schools also have important 'cultural' outcomes to promote, such as developing certain levels of personal dignity, self-esteem, and confidence; and teaching how to express oneself in thoughtful and 'unthreatened' ways within a group (Wyn and Wilson, 1993, p. 79). These are outcomes that can be promoted through the creation of gender-sensitive learning environments.

Why is it that some girls may not do well in science and mathematics? Why is it that few girls will select fields of study having to do with scientific and technological issues? While an easy response would be that it is simply in the nature of girls to prefer other fields and thus it is a matter of personal choice, the systematic under-representation of women in these fields suggests other dynamics at work. Since the school curriculum does not teach girls to counter gender stereotypes and to produce more balanced gender identities, girls do not acquire knowledge to change their societal context. In other words, access to schooling by itself does not diminish or counter the reproduction of gender relations operating in society.

III. The educational change process

The introduction of measures in educational settings to advance the condition of girls could be seen as a form of educational change or innovation. How do education systems change? Specifically, how can education systems be encouraged to improve their provision of education to girls?

The literature on educational change often reveals the role of outsiders (particularly, intellectuals, political representatives, and grassroots groups) in bringing new ideas and practices into school settings. Organizations tend to create inertias that make them impermeable to internal pressures for change: since established bureaucratic practices are disrupted and challenged by new ideas it is safer for people in the system to ignore them. The literature on educational change also shows that the more complex the change, the more difficult it is to force it on the system. The limited literature regarding change in gender-related education reveals an even greater reluctance to change, as many of these efforts challenge well-entrenched beliefs and call for the remaking of meaning.

Research has identified a number of factors that promote the implementation of innovations. These include:

- a perception of need;
- clear specification of the innovation's features (key roles, practices, procedures, content, evaluation);
- organizational incentives to engage in new behaviours (training, financial and non-financial rewards);
- increased ownership of the innovations by its implementors, and ongoing technical assistance and permanent monitoring (Fullan, 1994).

After many years of promoting educational innovations in the West and documenting their poor implementation, observers of change processes have concluded that the teachers are the essential piece in the transition and that teacher training deserves much more attention than it has received heretofore (Fullan, 1993). There is empirical evidence that when textbooks and educational materials are new but teachers have not been trained to use them, teachers will use them in traditional ways. Under those conditions, even gender-sensitive materials may be used to continue the reproduction of sexual stereotypes and the binary differences of masculinity and femininity. Support from the leadership of the institution involved is a powerful incentive to change: the role of local education authorities and the principal or headmaster at the school level are very important. Administrators shape the organizational conditions needed for successful implementation, such as helping elaborate shared goals and procedures for monitoring results. In the case of gender-related innovations, the limited evidence (mostly from the United States) suggests that women administrators tend to be more receptive to change than do men.

A common problem that blocks gender-oriented innovations is lack of funds. While some educational innovations can be translated into new procedures that may use limited additional funds, most efforts to change imply the deployment of considerable financial and human resources. For instance, in the case of girls' education, the revision of textbooks should lead to an identification of more appropriate textbooks to replace existing ones. Funds would be needed to design and print the new materials. Decisions to train teachers in the social relations of gender and in gender equity in the classroom will necessitate funds for teaching workshops. Some of this training will have to be ongoing, which will result in additional budgetary demands. However, while funds are needed, the amounts can be reduced through contributions (financial and in kind) by parents and communities, and through the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as consultants.

Ideological and cultural beliefs regarding femininity and masculinity, long internalized as 'natural,' often prevent transformation of school programmes and practices. Politicians and decision-makers opposed to gender equality often attribute pressures to change the social relations of gender to 'Western influences', therefore implying

that women in their own countries are satisfied with the status quo. In some cases, principles of 'cultural autonomy' are invoked. It can be shown, however, that cultural practices, norms, and mores are entirely socially constructed and thus tend to reflect power arrangements in society rather than an innate state of affairs.

It has been observed that pilot studies of innovations are usually successful. Difficulties emerge mostly when 'going to scale' – i.e. in the process of expanding an innovation to provide national coverage. What is needed in these cases is greater participation of the government and of a broader range of actors through partnerships and alliances of different kinds, at different levels of the system, and at different stages of the innovation process (Shaeffer, 1994).

Innovations in poor countries face problems specific to their context of limited resources. Developing countries often lack curriculum development facilities, teacher training facilities, control and support agencies, and mechanisms for the collection, analysis, and reporting of basic statistical information on their education systems (Vedder, 1994). This condition plus the various other factors identified above make the process of implementation of innovations a very difficult one. This is highlighted not to generate pessimism about change but to underscore the importance of considering the many forces that impinge upon transformative processes in the school system as well as identifying those forces that cling tenaciously to established traditions.

Most change is incremental. Nonetheless, incremental change is difficult because it calls for new practices, new definitions of problems, and contestation of established routines and authority. Moreover, change is difficult because people are not always guided by rational decision-making. Cognitive psychologists have determined that people put more emphasis on the risks than the benefits when making decisions, which means that it is easier to continue with known ways than to adopt practices that will present ambiguity and uncertainty.

IV. International support for girls' and women's education

At this moment, there is a great deal of governmental consensus worldwide regarding the importance of education for the advancement of women. One of the strongest forces in favour of girls' and women's education is the *Education for All* declaration (signed by most governments in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990). This document presents an "expanded vision of education", calling not only for primary education but also for early childhood development and basic education for youth and adults. Article 3 of the EFA declaration states that the most urgent priority is to ensure access to improve the quality of education for girls and women, and to remove any obstacle that hampers their active participation. It seeks the elimination of all gender stereotypes.

A number of other global declarations have brought the education of girls and women to the forefront in recent years. The "20/20 Initiative" adopted at the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995) advises donor agencies to devote 20 per cent of their assistance to basic social services, while suggesting that developing countries as well recognize that at least 20 per cent of their national budgets should go also to basic social services. The 20/20 Initiative includes seven goals to be achieved by the year 2000. The first two concern education:

(1) universal access to, and completion of, primary education; and
(2) halving of 1990 adult illiteracy levels with emphasis on reducing the disparity between male and female illiteracy rates (UNDP et al., 1994, p. 1).

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, adopted in 1979 and in force since 1981) and the Convention on the Right of the Child (adopted in 1989 and in force since 1990) stress gender equality in education and guarantee education rights and equal opportunity to education. CEDAW – ratified by 139 countries as of December 1995 – is clearly the bill of rights for women (see *Appendix A* for a list of the countries which have ratified this convention). Article 5(a) of CEDAW recognizes the influence of culture and tradition in restricting women's enjoyment of rights. It provides, therefore, that states are to take appropriate measures to eliminate sex-role stereotyping and practices that stem from a concept of the inferiority or superiority of one sex over the other. Article 10 calls for equal rights in the field of education, requiring provision of the same career and vocational guidance for both girls and boys, access to the same curricula, elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education, and the provision of co-education and other types of education as may be necessary to achieve objectives of educational equality. CEDAW also notes that, "Family education should teach the common responsibility of both men and women in the upbringing and development of children", which must, in all cases, be governed by the interests of the children. As stated in Article 5(a), CEDAW considers culture and tradition a source of many limitations for women and calls for the modification or abolishment of existing laws, customs and practices that discriminate against women (UN, 1979).

In addition to CEDAW, there have been several UN conferences that have unambiguously endorsed the need of education for girls, notably the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), the World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995), and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995). The last of these conferences focused on women exclusively and produced a document, the *Platform for Action*, identifying an extensive set of actions. This document contains an important section on education (see *Appendix B*).

In sum, it can be said that the process of educational transformation is far from simple, that complex innovations – as are those regarding girls' education – call for comprehensive approaches involving many actors, that teachers must be key resources in this change process, and that the question of girls' and women's education is supported by numerous international agreements morally binding the signatory countries and by at least two conventions which have the force of international law, and are thus legally enforceable.

V. Key areas of intervention in educational settings

As education systems set themselves to address the unequal and disadvantaged condition of girls' schooling, it must be recognized that interventions can happen through the supply of schooling as well as the demand of schooling. Although it is usually thought that the school can manipulate only supply (provision) factors, demand factors (by parents and students themselves) can also be easily influenced by the education system. In the section that follows we present various strategies to increase and improve girls' education.

The supply of schooling

Since in several countries there are still large numbers of young people out of school, it is clear that school construction or classroom availability is a problem to be addressed. Enabling more students to have access to school also tends to favour the access of girls to schooling. However, to reduce the gender gap it will be necessary to take special steps to favour or target the education of girls in particular; otherwise, although enrolment will increase, so will the gender gap.

Expansion via the formal system

Expansion of facilities is not limited to physical construction. Existing school/classroom facilities can be expanded through different time use, as follows: (1) by scheduling two or more separate shifts (instead of the usual single 7-8 hour shift) so that a larger number of students can be served per day; (2) changes to a school's time use can also be made by modifying the school year so that the school functions the entire calendar year. This can be accomplished by creating two or more 'tracks', by which, although students attend school for the customary nine months per year, different groups of students (assigned

to different tracks) attend school at different months of the year. This innovation, known as 'year-round schools,' has been tried successfully in large cities in the United States to cope with the large influx of mostly immigrant students.

The tasks and responsibilities of teachers within 'multiple-shift schools' or 'year-round schools' are greater than those of teachers in regular schools. Therefore, it is important to bring teachers and their unions (if represented) into discussions of alternative time use of schools. The use of multiple shifts and year-round schools cannot be seen as strictly administrative arrangements. They carry substantial implications for pedagogy: group work, peer tutoring, self-instructional materials, more independent learning styles on the part of students, and strategies to deal with highly heterogeneous classrooms in general (Torres, 1995). Expanding schools accessibility through the use of multiple shifts or changes in classroom schedules is essentially a solution for urban settings, since it implies that some schools already exist.

Schooling can also be expanded by making it less dependent upon physical facilities. Distance education, by which students can develop knowledge and skills through correspondence, radio, or TV classes can be very effective in augmenting the number of those served. While distance education has not been tried for primary schooling, it has relevance for the initial training and upgrading of primary school teachers. Improving the quality of primary school teachers and increasing their numbers will affect access to primary schooling through a variety of ways that will be seen later in this booklet.

Expanding through NFE and religious schools

In several societies, religious schools are an established feature in the intellectual and moral development of their members. Particularly in Islamic communities, Koranic schools serve children of primary-school age. These schools operate most of the time in parallel with the public school, providing one or two hours of study per day.

In countries where cultural norms still mandate separation of girls' and boys' schooling, efforts must be made to develop sufficient schools for girls. To expand the provision of primary schools for girls in those

countries, it has been advised that the Koranic schools: (a) serve girls and (b) provide longer hours of schooling, becoming in fact alternative rather than parallel schools. It is further thought that training the imam (the religious leader) as regular teacher will capitalize on an already existing intellectual resource. It remains unclear how much learning goes on in Koranic schools, apart from memorizing religious precepts. If the objective of the innovation is to advance girls' schooling – and provide girls and boys with new definitions of society in the process – it is not automatic that increased access to Koranic schools will accomplish this goal. Some interpretations of the Islamic religion present limited and constraining roles for women. The use of religious leaders as teachers might then create problematic situations for the education of girls. These situations need to be carefully examined before endorsing expansion through Koranic schools. To what extent will religious schools foster progressive norms regarding the roles and status of women and men in society among students? To what extent will Koranic schools be willing to question patriarchal values as well as attitudes and specific traditions which inhibit female education?

Additional ways to expand schooling can take place through the utilization of NGOs in the provision of what has been called 'non-formal primary education'. In a limited number of countries there are successful examples of how NGOs are setting up primary school programmes and delivering education effectively and at a relatively low cost. These NGOs can make a dramatic contribution in cases where the regular education system faces substantial financial limitations. By resorting to such elements as use of local teachers, use of existing or temporary facilities in the community, and in-kind contributions from parents, NFE primary schools can help to reach dispersed rural populations or small villages in remote areas.

NGOs can develop minimum learning packages to satisfy the knowledge and skills needs of rural or marginal urban populations. The possibility of transporting and adapting such packages to other regions of the country needs to be carefully considered. This form of alternative education can be used very effectively to serve girls simply by adopting enrolment quotas that establish specific proportions of girls and boys to be served through these programmes. While the educational technology to do so is already in existence, what must be done in cases of NFE primary education is to identify the conditions of partnership

between NGOs and government so that a relation of trust and co-operation may develop. The development of solid linkages between both sets of actors is recommended not only for a more fruitful performance but also because linkages between formal and nonformal education are needed to enable girls who have been attending the NFE programmes to survive the transition into more advanced years of the formal educational programme. Only in this way can NFE truly become part of a strategy for equal education opportunity. Examples of effective NGO involvement in primary education can be found in Bangladesh through the involvement of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), and Pakistan (through the involvement of the Society for Community Support) (see Stromquist and Murphy, 1995) and India through Lok Jumbish Parishad (Operations Research Group, 1996).

Curriculum

We are defining curriculum in this booklet to refer to the content of courses and programmes in educational settings. Educators must recognize that access is only one aspect of girls' schooling – albeit an important one. But if access leads to a schooling experience that reinforces messages about the girls' subordinate position in society, access is a partial victory.

Textbooks and supplementary materials and the lessons presented by teachers verbally in class contain messages, depictions, and illustrations that constitute the prime mechanisms by which values and expectations are transmitted, by which a given reality is constructed and presented. While the message of textbooks competes with that of peers, the home, and the world of work, textbooks are powerful agents in the production of representations given their role in the formal curriculum of the school.

Findings regarding the content of textbooks in industrialized and developing countries are very similar. For several years, it has been documented that school textbooks transmit messages and illustrations that present women in predictable situations: playing domestic roles and being passive, emotional, weak, fearful, and not intelligent. Men by contrast are portrayed as assertive and intelligent, and as taking on leadership and being open to multiple occupational roles. The

personality traits depicted in textbooks have been found to be very congruent with societal notions of masculine authority and superiority.

There is clearly a need to improve the current textbooks and to produce new ones. This implies work along several lines:

1. Removing language that depicts most examples of important human action as being taken by men. Such language uses masculine terms to represent both men and women, and include the pronoun 'he' which stands for 'one' (which can be either masculine or feminine), 'men' where 'people' (or humans) would do just as well, or such socially important terms as 'manpower' which could be substituted by 'human resources'. The need to remove sexist language may sound trivial to some but its constant use and exclusionary implications are psychologically debilitating for women, and should be considered among several other interventions on textbooks. For example, recently in Bangladesh textbooks were modified to refer to women by their own names rather than those of their husband. This is an effective way to permit women recover their own identity.

2. Identifying sexual stereotypes in stories, arguments, examples, and illustrations (photographs and drawings) and removing them from the textbooks. Throughout the world, primary school textbooks have proven to be remarkably consistent in showing a pervasive presence of sexual stereotypes and biases in such subjects as reading, history, and social science. Some examples of corrective work along these lines include initiatives in Chile and Guatemala, where the governments intend to eliminate sexist context from textbooks and have developed guidelines for editorial houses to be considered in the production of textbooks for both basic and secondary education.

3. Presenting more balanced accounts of actual accomplishments of women that have been obscured or ignored in society. For instance, the role of women in the informal economy, the role of women in history in the process of national construction or in the development of a national identity, women's participation in agriculture, women's role in popular medicine, and women's expression in the arts. More balanced accounts of women could be also presented by comparing the roles of women across different societies. This would enable students to learn from unknown or unnoticed contributions by and experiences

of women in legal and political fields, and in key decision-making roles in various institutions. Women should be represented in a wide range of activities across cultural and physical settings. In the Philippines, 80 per cent of the new textbook titles since 1991 incorporate a gender perspective (ADB, 1994).

4. Promoting an *altered* view of women's roles in society. This proactive use of gender roles should foster new social arrangements with reduced (or eradicated) discrimination and bias against women. For instance, discussing the importance of parenting rather than motherhood, depicting domestic work as a task to be shared by men and women, explaining that all people – not just women – have emotions, and presenting women in new occupational roles such as engineers, scientists, and political figures. This fourth line of action presupposes consensus on a new social vision; not a difficult task but it must be debated.

Educators who have been working with gender issues in the curriculum observe that a difference must be made between gender-neutral (non-sexist) materials and anti-sexist materials.

A *gender-neutral* is one that seeks balanced representation of boys and girls, and introduces examples of their reality. At present, with a gender-blind curriculum, girls learn to think not in terms of what career they will seek but in terms of how their lives will be configured. In other words, unlike boys, the girls' professional self-view is combined with their expected age for marriage and childrearing. These calculations are then balanced against the prospect of full-time work. A gender-neutral curriculum fosters a stronger self-esteem among girls but may not be sufficient to encourage them to question social expectations.

An *anti-sexist*, in contrast, is one that explicitly challenges representations, beliefs, and expectations about women and men. The anti-sexist curriculum would be more proactive and seek to promote new practices. Curriculum changes of this type would be emphasizing points (3) and (4) above, while a gender-neutral curriculum would work only with points (1) and (2).

It should be noted that, contrary to allegations that an 'irrelevant curriculum' causes girls to drop out of school, it is not irrelevancy that is directly responsible for dissuading girls from attending. The curriculum functions to reproduce conventional notions of femininity and masculinity. This objective of the curriculum, though negative for society, is not perceived by its victims as irrelevant.

Curriculum content

Work to change curriculum content usually takes place through teams within the ministry of education or within its curriculum development unit. When books are produced outside the ministry of education, the ministry produces guidelines for authors and publishers. In curriculum change efforts to introduce gender-neutral or anti-sexist content, members of these teams should include educational officers, textbook writers, editors, illustrators, and researchers. Moreover, such teams should receive training on the balanced treatment of the sexes in textual content and visual presentations. Certain subjects in the primary school curriculum particularly should be targets for review. These include reading, mathematics, and the social sciences (which often present as given customs and traditions that have negative consequences for women).

Changes in coursework

In addition to modifications in textbooks, schools can introduce changes in the programme of studies. This can be done in three ways:

(1) enabling girls to gain access to all courses and programmes presently available through the education system,
(2) creating courses for *both* boys and girls in subjects previously assigned only to girls or only to boys, and
(3) providing girls with courses relevant to their social and cultural advancement (sex education, legal issues, reconceptualization of fields such as science, history, and economics to make them both more gender-sensitive (i.e. more inclusive of women) and women-friendly (i.e. taught in pedagogies that tend to be particularly effective with girls).

Some changes are slowly happening along these lines. Two examples of work along point (1) are the programme of summer courses in technology for girls and one for caring and nursing for boys though state grants to local authorities in Sweden. Reportedly, large numbers of students have been reached through these courses (Government of Sweden, 1995).

Several examples of changes concerning point (2) above are the initiative in Antigua and Barbuda to introduce family life education for boys and girls into a number of primary schools, the efforts in Sweden to fund special programmes to encourage girls in motor mechanics courses and to have women metalworkers become teachers of vocational training in upper secondary schools, the initiative in the Netherlands to make the subjects of care and technology compulsory for both boys and girls, and the reformulation of the former 'home economics' courses into the new 'home technology and livelihood education' course now offered in the elementary grades as a common subject for girls and boys in the Philippines.

While some such courses have been opened to both girls and boys (e.g. home economics and manual arts), courses addressing the social relations of gender such as sex education, legal literacy, and peace education are unfortunately still very few. Examples of work along point (3) above are the attempts to align technology with girls' interests and learning styles in the Netherlands (Government of the Netherlands, 1995), and the efforts in Sweden in an undetermined number of schools to divide the classes 25 per cent of the time into boys and girls groups. At those times, girls are taught how to speak freely and present opinions while boys learn how to write and how to listen to their quieter classmates (Government of Sweden, 1995).

Topics that promote gender awareness-raising

These issues are practically non-existent at the primary school, yet they offer great potential to promote reflection and the acquisition of transformed gender identities. They include:

- parenting and changes in families;
- sexuality and sexuality control;
- authoritarianism in various institutions (including the family and schools);
- motherhood as an ideology;
- issues of power and gender politics;
- violence against women;
- knowledge of women in the economy; and
- sexism, racism, and other forms of individual and institutional discrimination.

It should be observed that a curriculum that seeks to advance the condition of women would have features in common with any curriculum aimed at creating more democratic conditions in school and society. Thus, additional features would be:

- critical thinking and problem-solving;
- respect for diversity; and
- education for citizenship, democracy, and human rights.

Educational materials for women using an 'empowering' approach, defined as "a process by which women gain control over their lives by knowing and claiming their rights at all levels of society", have been developed by the UNESCO Regional Office for Asia. These materials contain 60 teaching/learning units and 29 post-literacy materials, on issues such as sharing household responsibilities, productive work, women's multiple roles, participation in the political process, and domestic violence (Aksornkool, 1994).

Modifying textbooks

Several scenarios are possible. In cases where textbooks are not gender-sensitive but cannot be changed because they are relatively new, educational leaders and teachers have the option of supplementing selected textbook units in such a way as to address the gender component, or of replacing these units with new ones. An example of supplementing existing units in the area of history would be allocating homework so that the students carry out a year-long project on forms of participation of women in history, making sure that boys do interpretations of women in their history projects. This project could

involve students in historical thinking and engage them in keeping diaries and journals using primary sources. The second alternative, that of developing an entirely new unit, would be to add sections on women's history or women's participation in the labour force, devoting several class sessions to these topics.

An important point to consider when engaging in curriculum change is that the new messages and representations of women and men should not stand as separate parts of the curriculum; ways should be sought that permit these ideas to permeate the entire curriculum and all graders.

Instructional methods

While there have been many studies documenting the presence of gender bias and stereotypes in *textbooks*, evidence about the gendered nature of *teaching practices* is scarce. The abundance of findings about textbooks and the scarcity of research on classroom dynamics can be attributed mostly to the type of research involved. The content analysis of textbooks is cheaper, simpler, and less socially obtrusive. The observation of classroom dynamics, in contrast, calls for prolonged work in the classroom, using such methods as non-participant or participant observation and in-depth interviews (which require careful training), and negotiating access to the classroom and school (which need the permission of often reluctant education authorities). Not surprisingly, most of the research on instructional practices derives from the classrooms of wealthier countries – the United States of America, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

As in the case of the research on textbooks, findings about classroom practices shows considerable similarity across countries.

The bulk of the research on classroom dynamics – focusing on teacher-student and student-student interactions – reveals that teachers treat boys and girls differently in the classroom. Boys tend to be disciplined more often but they also receive more cognition-related attention.

In the United Kingdom it has been found that girls receive less teacher time, their contributions meet with systematic ridicule from

boys, and outside the classroom boys subject them to considerable non-verbal abuse and physical molestation. Visual, verbal, and physical harassment are routinely suffered by girls (Mahony, 1985). In the United States, teachers tend to give girls less useful feedback and less attention. Teachers both call on male students and allow them to speak more frequently. This situation worsens over the years of schooling, so by time of secondary schooling, girls are eight times less likely to call out comments (Sadker and Sadker, 1994). Boys also benefit more from current attempts to democratize science (AAUW, 1992). In many countries, girls do not like science because it has a competitive atmosphere and, quite often, authoritarian teachers.

Teachers – both women and men – engage in differential treatment of students according to sex and generally these teachers are not conscious of the ways in which girls are treated differently in the classroom and in schools. Teachers should avoid the following types of behaviour:

Giving subtle messages that a certain subject is not appropriate for one sex: 'Girls find math difficult.' 'Home economics is for girls'. 'Men like politics'. 'Boys will be boys'. Using sexist humour that reflects negatively on either sex. Ignoring stereotypic comments or behaviour from students and colleagues.

Making derogatory statements that reinforce the devaluation of girls and women. 'Don't cry like a woman'.

Failing to combat women's invisibility and negative images in textbooks. (Verheyden-Hilliard, 1976, cited in Ohsako, 1995.)

The classroom and school climate

In addition to dynamics concerning the transmission of subject matter, classrooms and schools are the grounds for the transmission of a host of messages about how people are perceived in society. These messages occur on an informal, non-official basis, yet they are pervasive enough to produce lasting impacts on young minds.

The school functions as a microcosm of society. Concerning gender distinction, it operates to 'normalize' women in subordinate positions. Schools seldom present women in positions of authority. Even in cases where women comprise the majority of primary teachers, school principals tend to be men. Other forms of subordination occur through the host of menial tasks women teachers are asked to perform, tasks that often constitute extensions of their domestic roles.

Research has shown that there is a tendency among children to separate themselves first by gender and then by race or ethnicity (Thorne, 1994). Moreover, teachers and teacher aides often prevent the interaction of boys and girls in the classroom by creating groups specifically by sex, usually for purpose of classroom management and social control. These practices contribute to making gender affect behaviour and social ties. Activities, spaces, and playground equipment in schools in the United States, despite the visible co-educational character of schooling, are gendered-typed. For instance, at breaktime, girls rarely ask for sporting equipment such as footballs, softballs, or basketballs; conversely, boys rarely ask for skipping ropes (Thorne, 1994).

To create classroom environments that appeal equally to girls and boys, teachers will have to *intervene consciously*, otherwise children will reproduce in the classroom the sex-role stereotypes they acquired at home and society at large.

A condition in schools that affects women teachers and women students alike is that of sexual harassment. In many African countries sexual harassment is a fairly widespread phenomenon in upper primary and secondary co-educational schools, and involves both boys and girls as well as female and male teachers. In general, however, more victims of sexual harassment are girls and most perpetrators of the harassment are males (sexual jokes. repeated propositions, leering, touching, in addition to more extreme forms of behaviour such as rape or sexual assault) (FEMED, 1966, p. 4).

In some African countries, in which the majority of secondary schools are located in urban areas (e.g. Uganda, Mali, Nigeria), girls report high vulnerability to sexual abuse, as they often come to be under the tutelage of older men outside the school who exploit them

sexually. In these cases, supportive measures such as boarding-school facilities acquire the greatest importance.

A crucial objective of teachers regarding the school and classroom climate should be to ensure that a girl's self-confidence and self-esteem are promoted throughout the schooling experience.

Teachers should teach personal dignity, and social legitimacy: how to belong to a group, to be in a non-oppressive relationship, to exercise personal and social power, and how to influence decisions in the range of situations they are likely to find themselves – in the family, among friends, in personal relations, and for critical assessment of media and other messages (Wyn and Wilson, 1993).

Teachers should try organizing students into small groups, sometimes homogeneous, other times heterogeneous in composition. The combination of girls and boys in problem-solving groups helps boys accept girls as partners in cognitive activities while the small size of the group may ease girls' participation. At other times, when boys act in domineering ways, homogeneous groups by gender may be advisable to promote greater assertiveness among girls. Under all circumstances, teachers should intervene actively to challenge the dynamics of stereotyping and power.

Co-operative groups with students in different roles – leader, discussant, recorder – should be promoted. Teachers who are successful with students in science programmes in the United States eliminate sexist language, promote co-operative groups, are fair in treatment and expectations of both girls and boys, and engage in less social comparison and competition (AAUW, 1992).

Several feminist pedagogies are available: engaging students in collaboration with one other, creating supportive environments that prevent verbal and physical harassment, encouraging non-competitive responses, and teaming with co-operating teachers and other adults.

A useful motto to follow is: 'Use the classroom not only *for* the development of democracy but also *as* a democratic experience'.

The question of co-education

Co-education or the joint presence of girls and boys in classrooms offers advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side is the daily proximity of boys and girls in work-like situations, which helps to dispel notions that boys and girls are sexually overcharged or that they should see themselves primarily in romantic and sexual terms. For boys, having girls as classmates counters stereotypes of the low intelligence and resourcefulness of girls. Research on the impact of co-educational schools in Peru indicates that boys in these settings are less likely to develop machista attitudes (e.g. feelings of male superiority), more likely to believe that domestic tasks should be equally shared by husband and wife, and less likely to develop aggressive tendencies; conversely, girls are more likely to develop intellectual and social (rather than romantic) relations with boys and more likely to prefer equality of rights between husband and wife at home (Sara-Lafosse, 1992).

On the negative side of co-educational schools, teachers – if not properly trained to address gender issues – may end up providing more attention to boys. Also, as the students become older, adolescent culture tends to create norms and expectations that act to the detriment of girls' academic achievement. Particularly in Western countries, girls develop among themselves a competition to please the boys; an important element in this competition is to avoid appearing smarter than the boys. In consequence, the girls' achievement tends to decrease. Studies by the World Bank focusing on the relation between type of school setting (single-sex vs. co-educational schools) and student achievement, have found that girls in single-sex schools perform higher in mathematics than those in co-educational schools, thus suggesting that single-sex schools enable girls to concentrate on their studies.

Since the findings about single-sex school settings for girls seem to go in opposite directions – good for academic performance but not so good for changing social relations of gender – school administrators and teachers should identify the specific cultural dynamics of their society before moving into one type of school or the other. It is also possible to have co-educational institutions but to have – as needed – single-sex classrooms within these schools. The purpose of these

classrooms would not be to provide the discriminatory curriculum and courses of the past, but to maximize the circumstance when knowledge and practice are best transmitted on a single-sex basis for the purposes of correcting gender stereotypes and biases in the society.

Teacher presence and training

Well-trained teachers are the best resources of an education system any time, anywhere. While teachers are precious assets, it is common to reward them poorly and to overburden them.

The training of teachers is crucial, yet this activity cannot be considered independent of the teachers' overall situation. In contexts where teachers are very poorly paid, it is frequent that the better ones leave their jobs and move into more financially rewarding jobs and professions. Without a contented, or at least minimally satisfied teaching force, training will not be effective in that 'trained personnel' will be continually lost to other areas of the labour force.

In efforts to incorporate teachers into the process of making the school and the classroom more gender-sensitive, one should have a better understanding of the personal lives of teachers and their conditions. Overall, most primary school teachers are women – except in several Sub-Saharan African countries where the occupation of teaching is still seen as prestigious.

Teachers, no less than other members of society, are products of its socialization practices. They not only have to be made aware of their role in sustaining gender ideologies but also must be incorporated as change agents in the task of transforming gender ideologies. Yet, we know little about the teachers' lives beyond their immediate teaching roles. We know little of the demands they face in everyday life, in combining private and professional roles. We know little about how they could use schools and social networks for social change.

There are very few efforts at present by governments to train teachers in non-sexist or anti-sexist education. Some exceptions seem to include the industrialized countries and a few developing countries, such as Chile and India.

The effective training of teachers must combine theory and practice. Only in this way may critical capacities and commitment to action be sustained in order to overcome institutional domination and repression of particular social groups in education (Ewert, 1991).

The presence of women teachers

In societies where there is strict control of girls' sexuality, the presence of women teachers facilitates the enrolment and attendance of girls in primary schools. The possibility for women to become teachers also has benefits of its own in that it provides women with access to the labour market, and thus with greater control over their lives. The presence of female teachers in the schools also contributes to the provision of role models and subsequent higher motivation for girls. Girls need models close to them, not in the distant media or past. Female teachers are important in all situations: for positive role modelling, identification with girls' situation, and parental support of girls' education.

As noted above, in some cases the increase in the number of women teachers is necessary to encourage parents to send their daughters to school. Women should also serve as teachers in all institutions with female students (Gachukia, 1994). Teachers should be also trained to occupy instructional roles in the fields of science, mathematics, and technical/vocational subjects.

In cases of very low representation of women as teachers, the adoption of affirmative action policies might be necessary. One example of this is the decision in Bangladesh to hire new women teachers until a teacher ratio of 60 men to 40 women is reached.

Teachers, as professionals, need to be trained not only prior to fulfilling their position in the classroom but also after they have started their practice. Teacher training must be seen as a single process with two moments: pre- and in-service teacher training. Attention to these two moments, however, does not necessarily require training in teacher training schools. Alternative ways of providing systematic and ongoing training should be considered. In many developing countries, it is often assumed that teachers need only initial preparation (pre-service) and that they will acquire new knowledge and skills through their own

efforts. Often, therefore, in-service training is provided only as a tool for the implementation of a policy or project, not delivered on an on-going basis (Torres, 1995).

Pre-service teacher training

Training should be provided for women to serve as teachers in all subjects of the curriculum. In-service training programmes should also be provided to upgrade and encourage women teachers to move into administration. Further, in-service training should be provided outside formal institutional parameters (i.e. normal schools or teacher training colleges) to encourage women to be recruited and upgraded at all levels.

New primary teachers need to differentiate among the various approaches to gender in education: gender-blind, gender-neutral, and anti-sexist education. In examining textbook objectives, new teachers should be trained to assess messages and illustrations in terms of their impact on gender identity formation. Teachers should also be trained to detect teacher bias in classroom interaction and to develop a gender-fair curriculum. It would be useful for new teachers to receive training in educational and vocational guidance, so that girls learn from an early age that there should be no occupational limitations on account of one's sex. They should learn how to teach girls (and boys) to detect sexual abuse and harassment, and how to engage in fertility management. Teachers need training in counselling and involvement in management; it is important for girls to receive career advice in primary school because attitudes may be too entrenched by the time girls reach high school.

To ensure the presence of women teachers throughout the system, particularly in rural areas, will imply support for women teachers in terms of housing, and incentives to be away from their families will be necessary in the early stages of their recruitment and assignment.

Teacher training should provide new teachers with practical written guidelines and manuals, with opportunities for experimenting with new materials and instructional practices, and with skills to develop collaborative teaching relationships, including efficient tutor-mentor strategies.

In-service teacher training

A frequent defect of in-service teacher training (*recyclage*) is that it amounts to a short, one-time event. Often these workshops are offered as standardized packages by experts who are not familiar with the unique problems and circumstances of individual schools. The content of the workshops, as a result, does not help practitioners to solve day-to-day challenges. Think what roles teacher unions and teacher professional organizations can have in the design of workshops or in the dissemination of information about good teaching practices.

In-service training should be seen as spaces for collective reflection and to increase one's own personal awareness of teachers as social actors and possible change agents. This training should provide teachers with the research or analytical skills so that they are enabled – and encouraged – to analyse their own performance.

In-service training should be provided in the form of recurrent workshops and frequent production of educational materials so that existing teachers are gradually sensitized to conditions of life and work of women and of girl students. In attempting attitudinal and behavioural changes concerning gender issues and the treatment of girls in the classroom, it might be more difficult to modify the long-term practices of experienced teachers than to change the still-tentative practices of new teachers. With many individuals set in their ways about teaching primary school students, an effective in-service teacher training programme will have to be provided at the *local level* and on a *frequent* basis.

As in the case of pre-service teacher training, the training of ongoing teachers should include guidance and counselling, human rights education, formation of self-identity, interpersonal community skills, and knowledge of women's issues. Teachers should also be made aware of the conditions under which equality (or inequality) emerge in a classroom's physical arrangements, and be familiar with the various kinds of inter-personal relationships and interactive classroom methodologies.

To have an impact on primary school teachers, it will be necessary to intervene also in university programmes that provide teacher credentials. The training of personnel in teacher training schools and in schools of education will influence the kind of pre-service training they provide to future teachers. Work has to be conducted so that these programmes are more explicit in the treatment of gender issues in their curriculum. New issues such as programme administration and evaluation of gender-oriented social development programmes should be included.

It will be important to develop modalities of teacher training that are much more horizontal than in the past. Work can be conducted among colleagues so that, as a group, they develop strategies to examine stereotypes of racial and cultural groups, women, social classes, and disabled people and incorporate this analysis explicitly into the curriculum. Most teachers have witnessed in their classes and schools name-calling and racist and exclusionary behaviour. As Nieto (1996) recommends, these experiences can be integrated into the training curriculum by asking teachers to remember the last such incident. "How was it handled? How would it be an explicit part of the curriculum? What materials might help you? What roles should parents and community members have in dealing with these issues? How might you use stories in the news to bring issues of gender inequalities in society?" (p.369). To address gender issues successfully, teachers will need to be educated in 'border-crossing', an expression coined by Giroux (1992) to describe persons able to explore zones of cultural difference and diversity, able to see the world from the perspective of the other.

Student and teacher incentives

A number of monetary incentives can be offered to increase girls' enrolment or their sustained participation in school. Such incentives include *lessening* expenses through scholarships for tuition or subsidies for uniforms, for boarding facilities, or for textbooks. Financial incentives can also take place by *removing* expenses. Examples of this would be the elimination of tuition fees and of examination fees, it would also include the free provision of school textbooks and educational materials. A third form of financial incentive could occur by *eliminating the need* for such expenses. An example of this would

be the elimination of the mandated school uniforms or parental contributions for extra-curricular activities, thus releasing poor students from additional expenses. Financial incentives have occurred in a number of countries: in Bangladesh a scholarship scheme has reduced the number of dropouts among girls by enabling them to continue their schooling as long as their performance is good. In Malawi, the government waives school fees for girls who do not repeat primary school classes.

Financial incentives, though desirable, typically suffer from three weaknesses: they are often measures that are applied to a select few; therefore, they do not solve the bottleneck of frustrated demands. These incentives also do not address the causes for the low participation of girls in schooling; they treat the symptoms. Third, they create among others in society, particularly boys or parents of boys, feelings of exclusion as they see this type of help as an instance of positive discrimination. Financial incentives at the individual level should not be discarded but they should be recognized as partial measures.

A powerful incentive for greater participation in primary school is to make it clear that transition to higher levels of education (i.e. secondary school) is possible. The availability of secondary education affects the motivation for girls enrolling in primary education as they can see that this level can lead to higher levels of education and thus to better jobs. Provision of boarding schools for girls especially at the secondary level creates a favourable environment for learning and achievement. Hence, boarding schools can play an important role for poor and rural girls facing problems of poverty, sexual safety, distance, and parental motivation (Gachukia, 1994).

Financial incentives can also be given to schools. One example of this would be to reward the schools with the best female representation in enrolment and lowest levels of girls' repetition. These financial incentives as well as the provision of boarding schools will represent added expenditures for schools, but when seen in the context of overall social benefits and reduced girls' dropout rates, these are important and useful investments.

Supportive mechanisms

This rubric comprises school policies and strategies to modify the school climate for either girls or women teachers. Supportive mechanisms for students are the logistic interventions that facilitate either access or completion. They include the building of schools closer to home, exposure to more female teachers, access to boarding facilities for secondary schooling, schools that provide bathrooms and safety, less punitive policies regarding student pregnancy, and school offerings that include counselling and childcare services.

Pregnancy is a major immediate cause for girls dropping out of school in many education systems. In several African countries, it is not a major problem only in secondary school but also in the upper grades of primary. In some industrialized countries, pregnancy also poses a considerable problem. In the United States, one-fourth of all high school withdrawals are related to pregnancy, which means that the statistics for girls alone must be even higher (US Department of State, 1995). A supportive mechanism that has been tried in some countries, for instance, Malawi, de-stigmatizes student pregnancy and makes it possible for girls to reapply to school after delivery. As noted earlier, girls who have children while young not only stop their own schooling but tend to have more children than their educated counterparts. It is essential, therefore, to enable them to complete their studies.

An important supportive mechanism – and one which is relatively cost-free – is to make schools operate according to schedules set up by the community and that vary according to the season (to accommodate monsoon, harvest time, winter, etc.). These flexible schedules take into account physical obstacles that students face or work that is required of them. One must take into account that flexibility in school schedules should be done with a careful understanding of why it is necessary, how girls are being served, and whether the flexibility is fostering or preventing social change. In some cases, when classes are adjusted so that they do not interfere with the demands on girls' domestic work, flexibility may be best described as an accommodation that solidifies an existing sexual division of labour rather than a measure to contest it. When flexible scheduling contributes to the maintenance of the sexual division of labour, these strategies should be seen as temporary – long enough to create a constant demand for girls' schooling. A

positive feature of these efforts to make schooling more 'flexible' is that they can involve parents and other community members in meaningful ways with regard to school functioning and performance.

If many young girls must stay home to take care of younger siblings, the school could provide a powerful supportive mechanism by offering some form of child-care service. This could be done by creating more pre-school facilities near or in the primary school itself.

Communities can negotiate successfully with school authorities different times for their schools. The main consideration here is that the number of school days per year should be maintained and that special efforts should be made to ensure that students in the last grade of primary education complete their academic year in time for a smooth transition into secondary education.

A supportive mechanism aimed at women teachers but with clear benefits for students is the provision of housing facilities (or subsidies for teachers) so that they may be encouraged to work in rural areas. The provision of housing facilities may make it possible for two or more women teachers to live together, thus providing each other mutual support and countering cultural norms about women's autonomy.

VI. Actors and roles in the development of strategies

At present, there is a good political climate for investing in primary education for girls as numerous global declarations have endorsed the right of women to equal education. These declarations, unfortunately, have to be contrasted with the slow implementation of the agreements. Often, the problem of girls' education is simplified to mean merely access to school, and this concern is limited mostly to countries in which girls' enrolment in school is extremely low. This preoccupation reflects an implicit position that beyond access at the basic levels of education there are no other educational problems facing girls. Consequently, there is a prevailing position held by governments that curriculum does not need major revisions along gender lines nor do teachers need to be trained to create gender-sensitive environments.

The most compelling evidence of the inadequate attention given to girls' education is the limited implementation of the *Forward-Looking Strategies* (FLS), the global document to advance the condition of women signed in Nairobi. The interim report of FLS (with 40 per cent of the countries having reported) showed only a few countries engaged in a comprehensive strategy to advance women's education. Measures adopted included introduction of new curricula regarding parenting and special courses on women's issues in colleges and universities, the promotion of women's participation in high technologies, and the provision of training projects in new technologies and marketing techniques. Only one country reported efforts to recruit women to top positions in school administration. Most country reports emphasized expanded literacy programmes for adults, especially rural women, noting that these programmes focused on health, nutrition and home economics (CSW, 1990, p. 55), but the reports provided no indication as to the number of women reached through these literacy programmes. Generally, the programmes were very small and limited to a few geographical areas (CSW, 1990). In the final national reports

presented at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (September, 1995), many countries gave educational statistics on girls' participation in primary school. In practically all cases, girls' enrolment had grown. At the same time, no evidence was presented to demonstrate that this growth was the consequence of particular policies and interventions to promote girls' schooling.

Different levels of response

Before we move to the discussion of possible actors to advance the condition of women through education, it may be useful to review the various responses to women's needs that occur in practice. There are three levels of response by the government and educational authorities to women's inequality in education and training, moving from the simplest to the most transformative:

First Level. Responses that: (a) open the school to girls, i.e. do not deny access to them, and (b) provide knowledge to women in their current socially expected roles as mother and household manager, consider women's current physical and psychological constraints (a response derived from improved cultural norms) and reduce women's domestic labour. Examples of this first-level knowledge transmission would be the provision of skills in nutrition, hygiene, childcare, health, sewing, and family planning. It also includes giving women low-level production skills so that they may join the informal sector of the economy. Examples of the measures that would remedy physical and psychological constraints would be: establishing classes closer to the student's home, setting a flexible schedule of classes, providing more female teachers, building schools with greater physical security or bathrooms for girls, setting up single-sex schools, and offering afternoon classes for adult women, a time when married women are more available.

Second Level. Responses that seek to give women opportunities to reach the same types and levels of education and training as men. This would include removing from textbooks sexual stereotypes and images that convey inferior or passive views of women, providing stipends and scholarships to enable girls and women to continue attendance in educational programmes, promoting girls' and women's retention in non-conventional fields of study so that they may move

into occupations that are correspondingly non-conventional for women, implementing measures (e.g. quotas, scholarships) to promote the presence of women at the tertiary levels of education and in post-university training so that women may move to positions of leadership, providing counselling and related supportive services to facilitate women's choices of fields of study, and moving women into administrative positions so that decisions affecting school experience and programming are more gender-sensitive.

Third Level. Responses that challenge the ideological and material conditions that support women's inferior position in society. This implies transforming the social relations of gender through interventions in the mass media, economy, education, and family. It calls for reformulation of messages and images of women not only in ways to remove sexual stereotypes but to present alternative ways of conceptualizing personal identities and collective relations in society. Measures of this type within education would include efforts to remove sexual stereotypes and replace them with an accurate and alternative representation of men and women, to train all teachers in gender analysis and non-sexist practices, to develop a strategy from preschool to high school to foster in girls a predisposition toward science and technology, and to provide women with knowledge and skills that would enable their empowerment, i.e. a sense of control over their own lives. It would also imply providing concrete situations for the enactment of new values and attitudes, for instance, enabling women to become school administrators and to attain other positions of authority.

The empirical evidence to date indicates that governmental interventions tend to concentrate on first-level strategies and to engage in second-level strategies primarily when supported by international assistance (Stromquist, 1994b). Third-level responses are addressed by women's NGOs in terms of strategies of programme objectives and content, but, to the extent that third-level responses call for widespread interventions in society, the work of NGOs constitutes a relatively small effort toward change in the social relations of gender.

A useful point of departure in strategies to improve the education of girls and women will be the creation of consensus and support as well as awareness among policy-makers, implementors and grassroots

organizations. Coalitions must be developed among these actors and alliances can be forged through frequent meetings and discussions among multiple actors concerned with educational issues. The stronger the alliances with reputable and solid gender advocates, the greater the likelihood of implementing gender policies.

National seminars with the participation of diverse sets of actors – government officials, NGOs, voluntary organizations, academicians, experts from other areas such as business, health, etc. – would be an effective way of developing contacts with like-minded persons and institutions. These national seminars could be sponsored by a combination of contributions from the private sector and some from development agencies. Facilities could be borrowed from universities without much expense. It would be important to have the participation of both secondary and university students in these seminars.

As various actors move to work on gender issues, it might be helpful for them to structure the discussion along four broad sets of questions: (a) In what areas has the education system been effective for girls' education and why? (b) What problems persist and why? (c) What are some feasible and effective interventions that could advance the schooling of girls? and (d) What problems are likely to emerge in the implementation of these interventions? Following open discussion of these questions, various actors could assume leadership for working on points (c) and (d).

In this booklet we have identified problems regarding the education of girls in a general way. As educators and others move toward strategies in their respective countries, it is clear that particular cultural and material conditions will have to be taken into account in the measures to be selected. For instance, in a country where the net enrolment rate in primary education is less than 70 per cent and there is a gender gap greater than 20 per cent, it could be argued that basic education should receive at least 50 per cent of the total national budget for education in order to start creating a wider horizontal base and thus ensuring the incorporation of more students into the education system.

Some broad priorities are discernable by geographic region. Improving access in *African* countries calls for establishing primary and secondary schools and classrooms closer to home (i.e. creating more schools) and reducing school fees for both levels of schooling. In *South Asian* countries it will call for increasing the number of schools and classrooms and for setting up single-sex and flexible schedule schools. In both regions, Africa and Asia, the use of NGOs in the provision of non-formal modes of educational delivery would seem necessary. Also, exploration of a reduced number of school hours over a longer academic year might be in order. Countries in those regions would benefit also from more intensive efforts to mobilize communities and families (especially women) in the support of girls' education. In Latin America, the main problem is that of retention; so strategies should address teacher training. A related strategy in Latin America would be working on improved salaries for teachers so that competent professionals do not leave the field to secure decent employment in other occupations. An important element in the expansion of girls and women's schooling will be the provision of preschool, partly to prepare disadvantaged children for the demands of schooling but also to release women (mothers and daughters) so that they may be more available for their own education and work.

Co-operation with other government agencies

In most countries today there is a Women in Development (WID) unit (sometimes called Women's Bureau, Ministry of Women's Affairs, National Council of Women, etc.). The role of these WID units – themselves a creation of government commitments made in Nairobi in 1985 – is to promote women's rights at all levels of government. Educators are advised to get to know the person – usually a woman - in charge of the WID unit and to bring her or her associates into the efforts to address girls' education. The WID unit could help, as has happened in a South-Asian country regarding the FLS, to extract all relevant educational paragraphs from the *Platform for Action* (the document agreed upon in Beijing in 1995), distribute information about successful educational policies and programmes for girls, and organize networking sessions between NGOs, government officials, experts, and academics (UNIFEM and UN/NGLS, 1995).

Education ministries have relatively low status compared to other governmental sectors. While inter-governmental co-operation is a must, it might be advisable to seek work with other ministries after a broad educational coalition has been developed and clear responsibilities and opportunities for the other sectors have been identified.

Annual campaigns on the importance of education for girls and women, with the participation of multiple actors (teachers, parents, students, political leaders, community organizations) should be organized. It is also advisable that organizations similar to the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) be created in other developing regions[1].

FAWE's priorities focus on mainstreaming gender concerns into national educational programmes; convincing society, government, donors, and NGOs of the need to invest more resources in girls education; supporting women administrators, researchers, and teachers so that they in turn can have a positive impact on female education; and integrating gender studies into university research, curriculum development, and policy research (FAWE, 1993). It shows that regional coalitions can be powerful.

Educational efforts within the system

Below we explore two levels within educational institutions, the central or regional level, and the school/community level.

At Ministry of Education or regional levels

Some centrally-organized initiatives could include:

(1) The creation of an advisory committee on girl's education. This committee would be composed of salient representatives of persons in educational administration and

1. FAWE, in existence since June 1993, is registered as a regional NGO based in Nairobi, Kenya. It comprises women ministers of education, vice-chancellors, and other senior women policy-makers from several African countries.

curriculum, women in academia, and representative members of NGOs, the feminist movement, and classroom teachers.

(2) The publishing of gender-sensitive educational materials or textbooks.

(3) The provision of ongoing in-service teacher training.

(4) The collection of educational statistics by gender. Educational statistics, to be organized into a data bank, should include information on enrolment, dropouts, repetition, and completion rates at all levels, broken down by sex. These statistics should also make it possible to develop baseline data (i.e. describing the educational situation prior to the implementation of a given policy) and enable researchers to follow up specific cohorts.

(5) The creation of national centres providing career information and counselling information for girls about scientific and technical fields of study, as those organized in the Netherlands and France. These centres provide information on the schools offering these programmes, the criteria for admission, and types of jobs and salaries to be expected for these fields of study.

(6) The provision of training for educational administrators. These experienced people, who have gained much expertise through years in the system, are not always cognizant of how education systems and gender issues interact; hence, their training in this matter is necessary. Given the short time available to them for training, study visits inside the country or outside the country to exemplary programmes would help. A component of their training must include gender analysis, an approach defined as assessing the impact of a given programme or project on women as compared to men, and the extent to which this intervention addresses the specific interests and needs of different categories of women. Gender analysis comprises probing four aspects: the gender division of labour of workload, gender-related access to and control over resources and services, women's participation in decision-making and organizational capacities, and views and expectations of women (and men) regarding the proposed intervention (Gianotten et al., 1994, pp. 13 and 18). Administrators should also be trained to

conduct institutional analysis, which includes identification of perceptions and attitudes regarding gender issues among female and male staff of the educational institution involved and identification of institutional constraints and opportunities for implementing a gender-oriented intervention (Gianotten et al., 1994, p. 21).

(7) The enforcement of universal, compulsory, and free basic education for both girls and boys. This principle, although centrally-decided, is highly dependent on work at the local level for its success. The participation of administrators, teachers, and parents in enforcing it at the school level is crucial.

(8) The judicious use of single-sex schools and single-sex classrooms. The provision of single-sex schools in countries that severely constrain women's physical mobility is recommended only as a temporary measure to facilitate girls' access to schooling.

(9) Finally, the translation of the education section of the *Platform for Action* into a specific national plan of action. This effort could be initiated at central levels of the system and organized in such a way so that it is greatly decentralized.

In schools or near schools

Two important actions should occur at the school or community level. They include:

(1) The creation of resource centres where teachers can have access to teacher aids and materials that are either non-sexist or anti-sexist in character, where they can be shown either in person or through videos the use of innovative teaching methodologies, and where they can identify indigenous materials that can be used in class (e.g. how to organize a low-cost bulletin board for thematic displays). These resource centres should be planned on a small scale, not as new or large facilities. In fact, they could exist in a corner of an administrative office and operate on an informal basis, with teachers and community members serving as volunteers for different projects and at different times.

(2) Working with teachers in action-research projects as has been successfully done in Chile, Argentina, and Mexico. These activities would enable teachers to become researchers and engage in knowledge production for the modification of a given problem. By reflecting on their own practices and by becoming more knowledgeable of group dynamics, teachers would transform themselves - a crucial point if they are to serve as change agents.

Involving non-governmental organizations

The emergence of NGOs throughout the world is providing a growing energetic force. Their participation in educational efforts, traditionally limited to adult education and training, is now expanding to cover primary education for poor rural and urban communities.

Although the primary education programmes offered by NGOs are being called non-formal, this term is not entirely correct. Many of the NGO-run schools follow the official curriculum and often seek to enable the students to make a transition into the regular school. What is 'non-formal' about them is that the 'school' may consist of only one to three grades, that classes take place in a variety of buildings, including houses and patios, and that the teachers do not have teaching credentials.

Some NGOs have connections with religious groups; most of them are secular. Not all of them seek to provide a democratic or emancipatory education, but many of them do. One feature that is highly positive from the perspective of advancing girls' education, is that many NGOs offering education for young girls have a long experience of providing education for adults. Thus, these organizations often possess educational philosophies that see the family as a whole and seek coherent educational and economic objectives.

NFE programmes run by NGOs are cheaper to run because they rely on less qualified teachers, use existing facilities, and are usually supported by the community through the provision of physical facilities and in-kind donations (particularly furniture and school equipment). Some of these NFE programmes are also supported by international

development agencies, which translates into a further relief for the country's educational budget.

NFE primary education programmes usually do not have as much social prestige as the regular schools, but their mission is generally not to be seen as totally equivalent. Their purpose is to serve student populations not covered by the public school. The fact that many of these NFE schools can operate in remote villages is crucial; many young girls, otherwise unable to travel long distances, can benefit. And, while these NFE schools offer only the basic grades of primary school, arrangements can be made for girls to continue their education in other schools. In fact, an important function of NFE primary schools should be to serve as feeding mechanisms to the regular school.

As noted earlier, successful examples of NGO involvement in primary schooling can be found in Pakistan (Balochistan), Bangladesh, and India. In Balochistan, an innovative NGO has successfully opened schools in villages where no schools for girls had existed. In Bangladesh, one of the oldest and largest NGOs in the world – BRAC – leads the way in the provision of NFE primary education. The BRAC schools, each of which serves a cohort of 33 students over the course of three years, have today a total enrolment of about 900,000 students (Stromquist and Murphy, 1995). The NFE centres in India are now expected to cover most of the state of Rajasthan. Although there are no precise analysis of programme costs, the Lok Jumbish project in Rajasthan operates at about 15 per cent of the cost of the regular primary school in that state (Operations Research Group, 1996).

There is at present a limited involvement of women-run NGOs in the design or implementation of educational programmes for girls. This should change because many of the members of women NGOs stand to make significant contributions to the understanding of gender processes in society. Very few countries have experienced efforts initiated by the government to bring together NGOs and education. One exception is Argentina, where NGOs of and for women have been offering training in work, health, social and political participation, and domestic violence. This training certainly has implications for the curriculum in primary schools as these issues are related to the creation of family climates supportive of children's education. This training also

has implications for the development of stronger school-community relations.

NGO-run educational programmes could be effectively used for the provision of alternative education to girls who drop out due to pregnancy. Their ability to tailor programmes to special needs and their flexibility in administration are considerable assets. Given the NGOs' extensive outreach into the community, these groups can use this advantage to recruit female teachers to serve in NFE primary education programmes.

In general terms, there is a need for a greater incorporation of NGOs in the design of national programmes being conducted under government support. This incorporation should lead to a revision of adult education courses for women, which tend to concentrate on health education and nutrition but ignore crucial issues such as power relations between men and women; which in turn affect beliefs about the importance of girls' and women's education.

Women in academia

Another underutilized resource in the design and provision of education for girls is women in academic positions in universities. These persons, with considerable knowledge of education, feminist theory, and research techniques, can be brought in as partners either through the creation of advisory bodies or the commission of studies on various aspects of girls' and women's education.

Not every woman in academia is working on issues pertaining to gender, but those in women's studies programmes and many in the social sciences and professional schools (particularly, schools of education) have accumulated much knowledge and expertise on the conditions and causes of the current status of women in society. Feminists in universities possess skills in data-gathering techniques such as surveys, focus groups, observations, and in-depth interviews. Several will also be familiar with action-research approaches, which would be most useful in creating participatory modes of policy formation and programme design.

These women, familiar also with feminist pedagogical principles, can conduct or synthesize research on women and orient the development of educational policies and programmes. Gender analysis – the understanding of the many forces that have an impact on women's condition in society – must be considered when developing educational interventions. These academicians, therefore, can help others to be more alert to the existing imbalances or gaps in status and role between women and men in the family, labour market, and community.

In countries where some communities are reluctant to send girls to school, it might be appropriate to use mobilization techniques to change parents' attitudes and behaviours. One such successful technique is popular theatre, by which the audience is asked to participate in locally-improvized plays or to react to the story in the play. Popular theatre has been found to be tremendously effective in promoting parental changes that facilitate the sustained participation of girls in primary school in Malawi (Stromquist and Murphy, 1956). It is effective because it brings to the fore fears, myths, and experiences that individuals would not tend to disclose on an individual basis. Most universities have a drama or theatre department, which could provide both the expertise and the personnel (actors) required for experimentation in popular theatre.

The skills of women in academia could be used to gather information to inject into anti-sexist textbooks such as the identification and portrayal of the special role of women and women leaders. Their skills could also be used to train teachers to produce and interpret quantitative and qualitative data, thus enabling teachers to be more active players in the process of educational change. Teachers trained in research methods can, in turn, train students in simple ways to collect data about their environment, such as mass-media messages on women, parental beliefs about girls' education, etc.

Finally, with the support of women in academia, educators may be able to bridge the gap between research and practice and to identify new research projects.

Working with the private sector

There is some limited but promising evidence of beneficial work using business firms to sponsor and otherwise support programmes on gender issues in education. For business, the incentive to support efforts to increase women's education (by providing textbooks, uniforms, general-use scholarships) could be justified in terms of the access the firms would gain to a better trained and thus more productive labour force. The disincentive might be that a labour force with greater education may drive wages up and make firms less competitive.

The most detailed example of successful co-operation with the private sector comes from Guatemala, where the business community participated with the government and local groups in the development of a 'national action plan for girl's education' and subsequently funded about 35 girls' education projects. There is reasonable evidence that the Guatemalan model is producing positive results in terms of school retention. It remains to be seen whether this model can be translated into other settings.

The business community has the potential to offer two additional forms of support to the school system. Firms could be used to sponsor alternative programmes of NFE and they could provide interesting examples of how to address the needs of teachers and other school staff. Successful corporations engage in sustained programmes of human resource development (i.e. in-house personnel training); these programmes could offer some models and strategies with which educators might wish to experiment.

Influencing the mass media

Unquestionably, the influence of TV, radio, and print media is greatly felt among youths and adults. While some programmes and articles in the media evince awareness of problems and issues concerning women, a large amount of these communications and images feeds upon stereotypes of women as sexual objects, presents women in limited roles as mothers and household managers, and

depicts women as passive and subordinate beings. The role of music as presented on tapes, CDs, and music channels is increasingly affecting the youth culture. The strength and frequency of media messages are enormous; hence, they cannot be left unattended in educational strategies to advance the condition of girls' education.

Through images and stories, the mass media create deep and pervasive representations. Soap operas, TV series, and newspaper and magazine advertisements promote images of women as objects of beauty, often with a highly sexual quality, and as providers of nurture and care, but essentially as individuals with little autonomy, resourcefulness, or intellect. The unrealistic media image of women as young, slender, and beautiful creates psychological attitudes that are damaging to girls. Not infrequently, this image also creates physical problems. In the United States and the United Kingdom, for instance, girls are constantly confronted with the model image of the blonde, blue-eyed, fair-skinned, thin woman. In consequence, many girls go into unhealthy diets and a few develop chronic eating problems such as anorexia and bulimia. Boys are also affected by the media, obliged to conform to often impossible images of handsome, muscular, and physically aggressive men.

While the girls who suffer most from this impact of the media are those in adolescence, the mass media operates on people of all ages. The school should work on media images from the earliest grades so that students become conscious, even at primary school, of negative and harmful stereotypes. There is a need to reverse the gaze so girls can be critical of the media by looking at what is being constructed, and by whom and why.

In a market economy, where profits are constantly sought, and sex and aggression sell, it is unlikely that the mass media will be persuaded to abandon strategies that exploit women. But, some inroads may be possible through:

(1) Promoting the establishment of media policies addressing gender portrayal and violence against women;
(2) Facilitating the integration of media literacy training into pre- and in-service teacher training in gender issues for primary and secondary school teachers. It is important to

work with high school students because many of the primary school teachers come directly from this level;

(3) Training women to use media (TV, radio, newspapers) for transmitting information (providing them with both technical training and social communications training) for the advancement of women, and training them to critique existing media programmes. The entrance of women to the media could be facilitated by the provision of scholarships to pertinent university programmes.

(4) Fostering ties between the ministry of education, grassroots groups, universities, and TV and radio producers in shaping popular programmes, particularly soap operas; and

(5) Supporting the production of educational materials by independent organizations. One example of an effective intervention is the production of educational modules as supplements to *Quehaceres*, a regular monthly newspaper by CIPAF (a feminist NGO in the Dominican Republic) and their subsequent dissemination to 10,000 individuals and groups. This effort, being funded by the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida), is an example that could easily be replicated in other developing countries.

Since the elimination of sexual stereotypes in the dominant media will be a long-lasting process, educators might try additional methods. An effective option is the development of alternative media and provision of training to be critical of the dominant media. Small producers could be encouraged to develop anti-sexist educational programmes using video or radio. These products could be linked to school systems so that they may be used in classrooms. The production of songs with a social message should also be encouraged via financial rewards to composers and performers.

It seems that work on gender issues by the mass media during the 1985-95 decade was substantial in several countries; these countries were able to train media personnel to produce balanced depictions of women and engage in TV campaigns dealing with equity, equal pay, minority women, and abused women (CSW, 1990, p. 60).

Engaging parents

The type and level of parental involvement in school activities and governance will vary according to the level of the parents' education and wealth. Putting rhetorical claims about parental participation aside, parents want to contribute to education systems in the ways that they feel they can. Also, their availability for participation depends on how pressed they are by problems of survival (i.e. the jobs they perform). Paradoxically, the parents least likely to be available for participation are those at opposite ends of the economic spectrum: those who eke out an existence through menial jobs in the informal sector of the economy and those high-level professionals whose time is taken up by their positions and responsibilities.

In seeking the participation of parents, it needs to be recognized that the term 'parents' is often a misnomer in that many of those who participate are not 'fathers' but rather 'mothers'. The availability of these mothers for participation depends greatly on their own socio-economic status and also on the psychological support given to them by school administrators. The involvement of mothers in school affairs must, therefore, be seen not as a threat but as an ideal partnership, which if well-delineated, could result in benefits for educators and community alike.

Examples of initiatives focusing on parents include a social mobilization campaign to inform the community of the benefits of educating girls in Malawi (now being expanded to several provinces in the country), and radio programmes in Mali to sensitize the community to the importance of girls' education (Stromquist and Murphy, 1995). This project, funded by USAID, is presently undergoing systematic evaluation.

There is a firm belief that illiterate parents do not consider the education of their daughters' important. While this might be the case for a large number of parents, it is not true for all of them. Certainly, there are many illiterate mothers who perceive education as important and as the key to achieving some modicum of economic independence. In door-to-door mobilization campaigns by NGO recruiters in Balochistan, it was found that mothers could be readily convinced

to support primary school for girls and that many of these mothers willingly performed additional domestic tasks at home in order to enable their daughters to attend school.

In addition to helping develop interest and support in the community for girls' schooling, parents can be organized to engage in practical tasks such as monitoring teachers' attendance and performance. The support of parents in producing a healthy environment in the school, e.g. ensuring the provision of light and water for students, cannot be overestimated.

In several communities, it is likely that substantial efforts will have to go into attitudinal transformations of parents by making them become more familiar with the benefits schooling may offer their children, particularly girls. Parents can also be the object of specific education programmes with positive consequences for the enrolment and sustained participation of girls at the primary school level. The objective of these educational programmes is the creation of a family culture that promotes the education of girls.

Certain ideas to be introduced in the schools, especially ideas controversial in the context of the culture, will be more readily accepted if the community is consulted previously. An effective sequence for the introduction of this type of message might begin with local leaders and then proceed to school committees, teachers, and parents. In working with parents, it will be helpful to identify those who can serve as opinion leaders.

While educated parents could participate in teams to examine the gender-fairness content of textbooks, make suggestions about desirable curriculum content, and evaluate teacher performance, fathers and mothers with no or little formal education can help in the education of their children. Some appropriate activities would be:

- making sure that their daughters go to school;
- making sure that their daughters arrive on time and are physically clean;
- making sure that teachers attend school;
- participating in decision making regarding extra-curriculum programmes;

- identifying facilities that can serve as schools and persons who can serve as teachers; and
- contributing money and/or work toward the school building and facilities. As noted earlier, school administrators could also engage parents in conducting community surveys to determine the condition of boys' and girls' schooling in their immediate area. They could thus find out how many children are out of school because they never attended or because they had abandoned it. and the proportion of girls and boys in each category. Parents could also serve to collect useful educational statistics such as completion rates by household income, ethnicity, and place of residence.

The supportive role of international development agencies

These agencies usually provide small amounts relative to the national education budget. However, by being specifically targeted, these funds enable the introduction of innovations and influence the climate of opinion. The role of international development agencies in the promotion of women's rights and issues has become paramount today, particularly regarding the implementation of second-level strategies described above. In the past ten years there have been significant and positive changes in the ways these agencies define gender issues, set up administrative procedures to ensure gender balance in projects and select the types of projects to be funded.

While there are substantial differences among international agencies in their commitment to gender issues, many have set up Women in Development units and are effectively engaging in agency work that is sensitive to gender analysis.

The leadership in gender and development shown by such agencies as UNICEF, UNDP, Sida, USAID, and the Dutch agencies promises continued attention to these issues (Stromquist, 1994a).

International documents signed at global conferences acknowledge sexist realities but they have no coercive authority. There is therefore a need for constant monitoring of the implementation of these

agreements. Here, the role of international development agencies can be positive in encouraging countries to follow up on their commitments. One modest but effective step to take by these agencies, for instance, could be the printing and dissemination of the key educational commitments and promises made at these conferences.

Donor agencies could be instrumental in providing funding for programme implementation partnerships among organizations at the national level, such as government agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and community voluntary agencies.

International development agencies can also make possible the creation of international fora for the exchange of experiences and the identification of successful projects and strategies to promote girls' education. The exposure of educators to concrete programmes would make them easier to emulate. In these international (perhaps regional) fora it would be useful to examine the work of both governments and NGOs in the area of basic education for girls.

Finally, international agencies can fund regional documentation networks for the education of women and girls. One example, from Asia, concerns the Asia Pacific Development Centre in Kuala Lumpur, which functions as a clearing house for locating materials, producing newsletters and journals, and co-ordinating the regional exchange of consultants (ADB, 1994).

VII. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

There is increasing recognition that the importance of girls' education enjoys widespread consensus among governmental agencies. The main bottleneck today has moved from acknowledging the problem to working on its solution. In other words, implementation remains weak. This, indeed, is one of the major lessons of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), whose review of the commitments made in Nairobi in 1985 revealed slow progress on many fronts for lack of action.

Monitoring units

The creation of monitoring units at various levels is crucial to ensure that governments maintain their commitments to policy implementation. Monitoring units at the community level involving parents of students would enable them to encourage school attendance of both teachers and students, particularly girls.

An example of successful monitoring at the school level is provided by the Netherlands, where all primary schools are to report annually on their emancipation policy – i.e., a policy that supports education and career choices that will promote girls' economic and social autonomy – and to state what they are doing to make the school more gender-sensitive in the areas of study and career choices (Government of the Netherlands, 1995). To facilitate work on these issues, an Emancipation Educational Material Bank has been established to co-ordinate the work of 10 regional networks to support the schools. Also, in the Netherlands, schools must present an annual report about the measures taken to combat sexual harassment; schools must produce biennial reports on the appointment of women managers, giving targeted objectives and achieved results. The Dutch government has established a target of an annual growth of 1.5 per cent on this

issue. Finally, the Netherlands has set up a process for successful positive action on secondary vocational education and adult education for women; this process started in 1992 and offers considerable potential for linking primary and secondary education (Government of the Netherlands, 1995). It was stated earlier that the response of countries to gender problems or deficits in education will vary depending on the level of educational development. But regardless of this level, certain critical indicators should be developed and disaggregated by sex: percentage of adult literacy, enrolment in primary and secondary schools, proportion of primary school completion, and numbers of women teachers at primary and secondary school levels. For the last three indicators, net enrolment rates should be prepared. For each of these statistics the gender gap should be computed, taking men as the reference group (i.e. M=100), to be able to assess women's progress compared to men over time. In order to trace and correct the compound effects of simultaneous markers such as gender, ethnicity, and class, the above indicators should be disaggregated by residence, ethnicity, and income, whenever possible.

When monitoring performance of education systems, it is customary to rely exclusively on quantitative indicators. However, these have limited usefulness. They tend to depict initial points in the system (e.g. enrolment figures) or final points in the system (e.g. completion rates in various programmes). They do not address educational processes and thus provide no knowledge of how schools and teachers function to produce the results that emerge. Even in the case of indicators regarding dropout and repetition rates, no knowledge is gained about how these rates are produced within schools.

Numerical indicators also have a limited usefulness when applied to gender issues. Indicators cannot measure ideological messages and socialization practices in schools. To describe subtle but pervasive influences through such terrains as classroom dynamics (teacher-student interaction) and knowledge and attitudes acquired by women and men in society, it will be necessary to engage in qualitative (i.e. ethnographic) studies of education systems. In these studies, it will be critical to consider the perspective of the various school actors, particularly students and teachers.

Ideally, a monitoring system should integrate all actors in the school system. This means that although monitoring units can be effectively set up at the school level, it might be advisable to establish a dialogue among policy-makers, programme implementors, educators, and women's groups.

VIII. Illustrative case studies

What policies have actually been implemented to inject the curriculum with new content, and to make environments more supportive of girls' education through changes in teaching practices, classroom management, school organization? Below three national studies are presented. They have been selected not for their representativeness but for the originality and comprehensive nature of their interventions. Readers willing to gain an understanding of the large array of educational innovations in basic education, some of which address girls specifically, are advised to read *Innov Database 1995* (Paris: UNESCO, 1995).

Argentina

The initiative in Argentina – where there is no gender gap in the participation of boys and girls in schooling but there are substantial differences in the selections of disciplines and careers (and the subsequent salaries and prestige enjoyed) – was part of a major educational law, enacted in 1992, introducing the principle of equal opportunity and eliminating discriminatory stereotypes in educational materials. The initiative was organized by the National Programme for the Promotion of Women's Equal Opportunities in Education (PRIOM), initially set up by the National Women's Bureau, and later set up as a special unit within the federal Ministry of Education.

The creation of PRIOM occurred at a time when the government of Argentina was carrying out a global education reform, whose main objectives were to improve education, expand compulsory basic education from 7 to 10 years of schooling, develop current and appropriate curricula, and provide ongoing teacher training programmes. PRIOM was conceived as a multi-dimensional and

cross-sectional programme, which attempted to integrate gender equality into the general reform process rather than leave it isolated as a 'thematic ghetto'.

PRIOM involved local ministries of education, women's bureaus within the regional governments, women in universities, and NGOs in the creation of technical teams in charge of developing non-sexist pre- and in-service training programmes. Special programmes were also offered for low-income, pregnant adolescents, and activities were conducted to sensitize the community and to involve it in planning, executing, and evaluating specific actions (Bonder, 1994).

PRIOM succeeded in shaping the new curricula at primary and secondary levels so that they would include gender content and perspectives in all disciplines. Specifically, this meant the incorporation of the contributions of women in all aspects of social life, the presentation of women's ways of knowledge and experience, and a critical examination of gender-based discriminatory structures and social practices (Bonder, 1994, p. 19). Moreover, PRIOM conducted two annual national campaigns on gender-fair education with the participation of teachers, students, parents, parliamentarians, political leaders, and community leaders. More than 100,000 persons took part in the dissemination and discussion of messages generated by the national campaigns. The innovators also organized a two-week long multi-media show, "Women and communication: a possible alliance". This exhibit created opportunities to debate women's images in the mass media and to foster the development and dissemination of new messages close to the lives of women at all levels of society. At this exhibit, a variety of media was shown: videos, TV commercials, advertising posters, pamphlets, training materials, and cartoons produced by government agencies and NGOs in many countries.

PRIOM came under considerable attack from conservative parents supported by the Catholic Church in 1995, just as the curriculum that had been extensively pilot-tested was going to be disseminated at the national level.

Accusing the leaders of PRIOM of being 'against the family'. the Catholic Church persuaded the government to move into a gender-neutral curriculum that left aside many of the contesting and challenging messages about established social relations. PRIOM continues to exist but in modified form.

Guatemala

This country, with a substantial indigenous population, has a large number of illiterate women and girls out of school. An intervention, the Guatemalan Girls' Education Initiative (sponsored by USAID), sought to mobilize the private sectors, parents, and community members in general in support of girls' access to education and sustained attendance.

The effort to advance girls' education began with a national conference of 100 of the most influential people from academia, industry and business, agriculture, government, media, military, religious organizations, women's organizations, NGOs, and local communities to discuss the state of girls' education in Guatemala and determine a set of policy initiative and action strategies to provide educational opportunities to girls at the primary level (ABEL, 1993). A National Commission was created to follow-up on the decisions reached at the conference.

The project that was put in place, *Eduque a la Nña* (Educating Girls), consisted of a package of innovations, such as the use of peer tutors, the provision of scholarships, the design of educational materials, and the use of social marketing techniques. The programme has been implemented in 21 Guatemalan highlands communities.

Seven full-time specialists were hired in the areas of literacy text writing and curriculum; these personnel have developed materials for integrating concepts, attitudes, and methods for improving girls' attendance and retention in primary school. The intervention included a component for teacher training, which provided them with concepts, attitudes, and methods for improving girls' attendance and retention in primary school and sought qualitative changes in teachers' attitudes and classroom strategies (USAID, 1993). The Ministry of Education funded the Girls' Scholarship Programme (to the amount of

US$500,000), which was applied in particularly poor regions of the country.

The Guatemalan initiative made special efforts to secure the support of key economic leaders from the private sector in sponsoring girls' education. The Foundation of Sugar Producers (FUNDAZUCAR) is playing a major role in the implementation of Eduque a la Nīna. Today, approximately 35 NGOs, private organizations, and businesses operate girls' education projects (ABEL, 1993).

An important feature of the Guatemalan effort is its explicit strategy of leaving 'taboo topics' out of picture. Since in Guatemala the issue of family planning does not receive much social support, the connection between women's education and reduction in fertility rates was played down. The entire project was presented as helping the social and economic development of Guatemala, avoiding references to the promotion of equality of girls' education. The initiative on girls was presented with the argument that to improve the quality and efficiency of the school system what was needed particularly was action to improve the attendance, retention, and completion of studies by girls. It also directed its efforts toward girls, not women, since USAID felt that when the girl-to-woman connection was made, certain Guatemalans felt threatened by what an educated woman might do (divorce, move away, work outside the home, challenge the traditional role expected of them in marriage, or not marry); in contrast, advocacy on behalf of young girls' primary education was not viewed as threatening.

Balochistan Province, Pakistan

The efforts in this geographical setting are noteworthy for the very conservative social context in which the expansion of girls' education is taking place and the role of an NGO – the Society for Community Support for Primary School in Balochistan – in mobilizing the community.

With only 3 per cent of the girls enrolled in school in rural areas due to both poverty and very conservative cultural notions of women's roles, the project (Primary Education Development), which seeks to increase access for girls to primary school, has been designed around constant community mobilization and support. Through NGO work, numerous rural communities were visited and community members contacted to encourage them to set up non-formal schools for girls. Following the identification of opinion leaders in a community, the NGO, in collaboration with district education officers, would hold a community meeting where parents were informed that the government would support the establishment of a primary school in their community if they identify a physical setting and a person who could serve as the school teacher. At that time, a Village Education Committee would be formed to represent the community before the government. The NGO provided training for the teachers, textbooks, educational materials, and ongoing technical assistance for the teachers.

Following a successful probationary period of three months (to show that classes took place, teachers were paid by their community, the community monitored classes and teachers), the government would recognize the school officially and negotiate with the community about the responsibilities of both parties.

To the surprise of the NGO and governmental officials, many parents – especially mothers – were supportive of enabling their daughters to attend primary schooling. Several mothers have taken measures at home – often absorbing the girls' domestic chores – to allow their daughters to attend regularly.

Of crucial importance in the Balochistan programme has been the use of NGO promoters, whose regular visits to the communities have fostered sustained community commitment to the objective of expanded education for girls. The NGOs work has been able to build trust within the community members as well as trust towards the government (Thomas, 1996). A close partnership has developed between the NGO and the government, reflected in the incorporation in the provincial educational budget of salaries for the teachers needed to run these schools. After visiting about 900 villages since 1990, the NGO (the Society) had established 279 girls' primary schools serving

12,000 girls by June 1995. The expansion of girls' education in Balochistan has also resulted in the emergence of women teachers, who are having a substantial impact in providing new role models in their community. Initially funded by external sources, Primary Education Development is now substantially supported by government resources. (For greater information about the Balochistan project, see Stromquist and Murphy, 1995).

IX. Conclusions

Throughout most of the world, progress has been made in the education of girls in primary education in terms of increases in enrolment. Much of this increase, however, has occurred because of an inherent, natural tendency for education systems to grow rather than because of specific policies to promote girls' education. A consequence of this is the parallel phenomena of increased girl's enrolment *and* a persistent gender gap at the primary school level.

Only a few countries have adopted specific policies to remedy the inferior condition of girls' education. Much work needs to be done on curriculum content, instructional practices, and teachers' expectations. The increased access of girls to schools, if accompanied – as is typical – by non-differentiated treatment in the classroom, will produce unequal outcomes, as boys tend to receive more resources.

As shown by the positive correlation between women's levels of education and various economic, social, and political variables, the promotion of women's education through the equalization of educational opportunity and the judicious use of often limited educational resources will result in the improvement of physical and human resources for the whole society.

To work effectively to improve education for girls, it will be necessary to act in a holistic manner to affect curriculum, to enhance the learning environment, to provide supportive systems, and to try alternative pedagogies to fit some differences between boys and girls in their cognitive styles, ways of learning, and knowledge. A holistic approach requires also the co-operation of a broad coalition of actors. Teachers are key resources in education system change; their sustained engagement and support by other actors must be fostered. This booklet has presented a large variety of social agents who could be brought more effectively into the educational arena.

To be successful, many interventions to improve education for girls will have to be supported by concomitant changes in social spheres. The provision of child-care facilities; increased access to water, fuel, and food; an enhanced value of women's work; the questioning of cultural norms that operate against women's conditions are all contextual factors that can increase the quantity and quality of women's education. They do not have to be tackled all at the same time, but educators should be constantly alert to the possibilities of introducing them into their society.

Today's economic, informational, and technological globalization of the world is introducing powerful forces that can have both positive and negative effects on the education of women. Positive influences are those derived from the several documents approved at recent world conferences. These documents contain specific policies for governments to follow; this should take the question of girls' education from any further debate into the realm of direct implementation of well-identified corrective actions. Negative influences result from the globalization of the production, trade, and communications. These forces are increasingly calling for a 'flexible' labour force – ready to move to the most productive jobs – and 'competitive' workers – able to produce efficiently and thus at lower cost than workers in other countries. Flexibility tends to operate against women by requiring time commitments that many women cannot give. Competitiveness requires investment in workers with the least amount of risk of leaving the labour force; again, this benefits men more than women.

Education alone will not solve the problems of the world but it will make a significant contribution towards their solution. The condition of girls' and women's education is deeply linked to the condition of their society. Humankind has made enormous progress along scientific and technological lines. This has brought with it new challenges, particularly a population explosion and an unrelenting burden for the ecology of our planet. Women are very much needed in the formulation of responses to these challenges. But, regardless of impending crises and women's role in their solution, girls and women deserve existences that are truly democratic. Education must serve women and educated women will benefit all.

Appendices

Appendix A
Country signatories of the United Nations Convention on 'The elimination of all forms of discrimination against women'

States that have signed, acceded or succeeded to the Convention
96 signatures, 139 ratifications and accessions

State	Date of signature	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession or succession
Afghanistan	14 August 1980	Signed, but not ratified
Albania		11 May 1994[1]
Angola		17 September 1986[1]
Antigua and Barbuda		1 August 1989[1]
Argentina	17 July 1980	15 July 1985[2]
Armenia		13 September 1993[1]
Australia	17 July 1980	28 July 1983[2]
Austria	17 July 1980	31 March 1982[2]
Bahamas		6 October 1993 [1, 2]
Bangladesh		6 November 1984 [1, 2]
Barbados	24 July 1980	16 October 1980
Belarus	17 July 1980	4 February 1981[3]
Belgium	17 July 1980	10 July 1985[2]
Belize	7 March 1990	16 May 1990
Benin	11 November 1981	12 March 1992
Bhutan	17 July 1980	31 August 1981
Bolivia	30 May 1980	8 June 1990
Bosnia and Herzegovina		1 September 1993[4]
Brazil	31 March 1981[2]	1 February 1984[2]
Bulgaria	17 July 1980	8 February 1982[3]
Burkina Faso		14 October 1987[1]
Burundi	17 July 1980	8 January 1992
Cambodia	17 October 1980	15 October 1992[1]
Cameroon	6 June 1983	23 August 1994[1]
Canada	17 July 1980	10 December 1981[3]
Cape Verde		5 December 1980[1]
Central African Republic		21 June 1991[1]
Chile	17 July 1980	7 December 1989[2]
China	17 July 1980[2]	4 November 1980[2]
Colombia	17 July 1980	19 January 1982
Comoros		31 October 1994[1]
Congo	29 July 1980	26 July 1982
Costa Rica	17 July 1980	4 April 1986
Côte d'Ivoire	17 July 1980	Signed, but not ratified
Croatia		9 September 1992[4]
Cuba	6 March 1980	17 July 1980[2]
Cyprus		23 July 1985[1,2]
Czech Republic		22 February 1993[3,4]
Denmark	17 July 1980	21 April 1983
Dominica	15 September 1980	15 September 1980
Dominican Republic	17 July 1980	2 September 1982
Ecuador	17 July 1980	9 November 1981
Egypt	16 July 1980[2]	18 September 1981[2]
El Salvador	14 November 1980[2]	19 August 1981[2]
Equatorial Guinea		23 October 1984[1]
Estonia		21 October 1991[1]

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Appendix A (continued)

State	Date of signature	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession or succession
Ethiopa	8 July 1980	10 December 1981[2]
Finland	17 July 1980	4 September 1986
France	17 July 1980[2]	14 December 1983[2, 3]
Gabon	17 July 1980	21 January 1983
Gambia	29 July 1980	16 April 1993
Georgia		26 October 1994[1]
Germany	17 July 1980	10 July 1985[2]
Ghana	17 July 1980	2 January 1986
Greece	2 March 1982	7 June 1983
Grenada	17 July 1980	30 August 1990
Guatemala	8 June 1981	12 August 1982
Guinea	17 July 1980	9 August 1982
Guinea-Bissau	17 July 1980	23 August 1985
Guyana	17 July 1980	17 July 1980
Haiti	17 July 1980	20 July 1981
Honduras	11 June 1980	3 March 1983
Hungary	6 June 1980	22 December 1980[1]
Iceland	24 July 1980	18 June 185
India	30 July 1980[2]	9 July 1993[2]
Indonesia	29 July 1980	13 September 1984[2]
Iraq		13 August 1986[1, 2]
Ireland		23 December 1985[1, 2, 3]
Israel	17 July 1980	3 October 1991[2]
Italy	17 July 1980[2]	10 June 1985
Jamaica	17 July 1980	19 October 1984[2]
Japan	17 July 1980	25 June 1985
Jordan	3 December 1980[2]	1 July 1992[2]
Kenya		9 March 1984[1]
Kuwait		2 September 1994[1]
Lao People's Dem. Rep.	17 July 1980	14 August 1981
Latvia		14 April 1992[1]
Lesotho	17 July 1980	Signed but not ratified
Liberia		17 July 1984[1]
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya		16 May 1989[1, 2]
Lithuania		18 January 1994[1]
Luxembourg	17 July 1980	2 February 1989[2]
Macedonia		18 January 1994[4]
Madagascar	17 July 1980	17 March 1989
Malawi		12 March 1987[1, 3]
Maldives		1 July 1993[1, 2]
Mali	5 February 1985	10 September 1985
Malta		8 March 1991[1, 2]
Mauritius		9 July 1984[1, 2]
Mexico	17 July 1980[2]	23 March 1981
Mongolia	17 July 1980	20 July 1981[3]
Morocco		21 June 1993[1, 2]
Namibia		23 November 1992[1]
Nepal	5 February 1991	22 April 1991

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Appendix A (continued)

State	Date of signature	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession or succession
Netherlands	17 July 1980	23 July 1991[2]
New Zealand	17 July 1980	10 January 1985[2,3]
Nicaragua	17 July 1980	27 October 1981
Nigeria	23 April 1984	13 June 1985
Norway	17 July 1980	21 May 1981
Panama	26 June 1980	29 October 1981
Papua New Guinea		12 January 1995[1]
Paraguay		6 April 1987[1]
Peru	23 July 1981	13 September 1982
Philippines	15 July 1980	5 August 1981
Poland	29 May 1980	30 July 1980[2]
Portugal	24 April 1980	30 July 1980
Republic of Korea	25 May 1983[2]	27 December 1984[2,3]
Republic of Moldova		1 July 1994[1]
Romania	4 September 1980[2]	7 January 1982[2]
Russian Federation	17 July 1980	23 January 1981[3]
Rwanda	1 May 1980	2 March 1981
Saint Kitts and Nevis		25 April 1985[1]
Saint Lucia		8 October 1982[1]
St. Vincent and the Grenadines		4 August 1981[1]
Samoa		25 September 1992[1]
Senegal	29 July 1980	5 February 1985
Seychelles		5 May 1992[1]
Sierra Leone	21 September 1988	11 November 1988
Slovakia		28 May 1993[4]
Slovenia		6 July 1992[4]
South Africa	29 January 1993	Signed, but not ratified
Spain	17 July 1980	5 January 1984[2]
Sri Lanka	17 July 1980	5 October 1981
Suriname		1 March 1993
Sweden	7 March 1980	2 July 1980
Switzerland	23 January 1987	Signed, but not ratified
Tajikistan		26 October 1993[1]
Thailand		9 August 1985[1,2,3]
Togo		26 September 1983[1]
Trinidad and Tobago	27 June 1985[2]	12 January 1990[2]
Tunisia	24 July 1980	20 September 1985[2]
Turkey		20 December 1985[1,2]
Uganda	30 July 1980	22 July 1985
Ukraine	17 July 1980	12 March 1981[3]
UK and Northern Ireland	22 July 1981	7 April 1986[2]
United Rep. of Tanzania	17 July 1980	20 August 1985
United States of America	17 July 1980	Signed, but not ratified
Uruguay	30 March 1981	9 October 1981
Venezuela	17 July 1980	2 May 1983[2]
Viet Nam	29 July 1980	17 February 1982[2]

Appendix A (end)

State	Date of signature	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification, accession or succession
Yemen		30 May 1984[1,2]
Yugoslavia	17 July 1980	26 February 1982
Zaire	17 July 1980	17 October 1986
Zambia	17 July 1980	21 June 1985
Zimbabwe		13 May 1991[1]

1. Accession.
2. Declarations or reservations.
3. Reservation subsequently withdrawn.
4. Succession.

Appendix B

Platform for Action (educational component)
Chapter IV, Section B, of the report on the
Fourth World Conference on Women,
4-15 September, Beijing, China, New York:
United Nations, 1996

B. Education and training of women

69. Education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace. Non-discriminatory education benefits both girls and boys and thus ultimately contributes to more equal relationships between women and men. Equality of access to and attainment of educational qualifications is necessary if more women are to become agents of change. Literacy of women is an important key to improving health, nutrition and education in the family and to empowering women to participate in decision making in society. Investing in formal and non-formal education and training for girls and women, with its exceptionally high social and economic return, has proved to be one of the best means of achieving sustainable development and economic growth that is both sustained and sustainable.

70. On a regional level, girls and boys have achieved equal access to primary education, except in some parts of Africa, in particular sub-Saharan Africa, and Central Asia, where access to education facilities is still inadequate. Progress has been made in secondary education, where equal access of girls and boys has been achieved in some countries. Enrolment of girls and women in tertiary education has increased considerably. In many countries, private schools have also played an important complementary role in improving access to education at all levels. Yet, more than five years after the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) adopted the World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, approximately 100 million children, including at least 60 million girls, are without access to primary schooling and more than two thirds of the world's 960 million

illiterate adults are women. The high rate of illiteracy prevailing in most developing countries, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa and some Arab States, remains a severe impediment to the advancement of women and to development.

71. Discrimination in girls' access to education persists in many areas, owing to customary attitudes, early marriages and pregnancies, inadequate and gender-biased teaching and educational materials, sexual harassment and lack of adequate and physically and otherwise accessible schooling facilities. Girls undertake heavy domestic work at a very early age. Girls and young women are expected to manage both educational and domestic responsibilities, often resulting in poor scholastic performance and early drop-out from the education system. This has long-lasting consequences for all aspects of women's lives.

72. Creation of an educational and social environment, in which women and men, girls and boys, are treated equally and encouraged to achieve their full potential, respecting their freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, and where educational resources promote non-stereotyped images of women and men, would be effective in the elimination of the causes of discrimination against women and inequalities between women and men.

73. Women should be enabled to benefit from an ongoing acquisition of knowledge and skills beyond those acquired during youth. This concept of lifelong learning includes knowledge and skills gained in formal education and training, as well as learning that occurs in informal ways, including volunteer activity, unremunerated work and traditional knowledge.

74. Curricula and teaching materials remain gender-biased to a large degree, and are rarely sensitive to the specific needs of girls and women. This reinforces traditional female and male roles that deny women opportunities for full and equal partnership in society. Lack of gender awareness by educators at all levels strengthens existing inequities between males and females by reinforcing discriminatory tendencies and undermining girls' self-esteem. The lack of sexual and reproductive health education has a profound impact on women and men.

75. Science curricula in particular are gender-biased. Science textbooks do not relate to women's and girls' daily experience and fail to give recognition to women scientists. Girls are often deprived of basic education in mathematics and science and technical training, which provide knowledge they could apply to improve their daily lives and enhance their employment opportunities. Advanced study in science and technology prepares women to take an active role in the technological and industrial development of their countries, thus necessitating a diverse approach to vocational and technical training. Technology is rapidly changing the world and has also affected the developing countries. It is essential that women not only benefit from technology, but also participate in the process from the design to the application, monitoring and evaluation stages.

76. Access for and retention of girls and women at all levels of education, including the higher level, and all academic areas is one of the factors of their continued progress in professional activities. Nevertheless, it can be noted that girls are still concentrated in a limited number of fields of study.

77. The mass media are a powerful means of education. As an educational tool the mass media can be an instrument for educators and governmental and non-governmental institutions for the advancement of women and for development. Computerized education and information systems are increasingly becoming an important element in learning and the dissemination of knowledge. Television especially has the greatest impact on young people and, as such, has the ability to shape values, attitudes and perceptions of women and girls in both positive and negative ways. It is therefore essential that educators teach critical judgement and analytical skills.

78. Resources allocated to education, particularly for girls and women, are in many countries insufficient and in some cases have been further diminished, including in the context of adjustment policies and programmes. Such insufficient resource allocations have a long-term adverse effect on human development, particularly on the development of women.

79. In addressing unequal access to and inadequate educational opportunities, governments and other actors should promote an active

and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.

Strategic objective B.1.
Ensure equal access to education

Actions to be taken

80. By governments:

(a) Advance the goal of equal access to education by taking measures to eliminate discrimination in education at all levels on the basis of gender, race, language, religion, national origin, age or disability, or any other form of discrimination and, as appropriate, consider establishing procedures to address grievances;
(b) By the year 2000, provide universal access to basic education and ensure completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children; close the gender gap in primary and secondary school education by the year 2005; provide universal primary education in all countries before the year 2015;
(c) Eliminate gender disparities in access to all areas of tertiary education by ensuring that women have equal access to career development, training, scholarships and fellowships, and by adopting positive action when appropriate;
(d) Create a gender-sensitive education system in order to ensure equal educational and training opportunities and full and equal participation of women in educational administration and policy and decision making;
(e) Provide – in collaboration with parents, non-governmental organizations, including youth organizations, communities and the private sector – young women with academic and technical training, career planning, leadership and social skills and work experience to prepare them to participate fully in society;
(f) Increase enrolment and retention rates of girls by allocating appropriate budgetary resources; by enlisting the support of parents and the community, as well as through campaigns, flexible school schedules, incentives, scholarships and other means to minimize the costs of girls' education to their families and to facilitate parents' ability to choose education for the girl-child; and

by ensuring that the rights of women and girls to freedom of conscience and religion are respected in educational institutions through repealing any discriminatory laws or legislation based on religion, race or culture;

(g) Promote an educational setting that eliminates all barriers that impeded the schooling of pregnant adolescents and young mothers, including, as appropriate, affordable and physically accessible child-care facilities and parental education to encourage those who are responsible for the care of their children and siblings during their school years, to return to or continue with and complete schooling;

(h) Improve the quality of education and equal opportunities for women and men in terms of access in order to ensure that women of all ages can acquire the knowledge, capacities, aptitudes, skills and ethical values needed to develop and to participate fully under equal conditions in the process of social, economic and political development;

(i) Make available non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive professional school counselling and career education programmes to encourage girls to pursue academic and technical curricula in order to widen their future career opportunities;

(j) Encourage ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights where they have not already done so.

Strategic objective B.2
Eradicate illiteracy among women

Actions to be taken

81. By governments, national, regional and international bodies, bilateral and multilateral donors and non-governmental organizations:

(a) Reduce the female illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 level, with emphasis on rural women, migrant, refugee and internally displaced women and women with disabilities;

(b) Provide universal access to, and seek to ensure gender equality in the completion of, primary education for girls by the year 2000;

(c) Eliminate the gender gap in basic and functional literacy, as recommended in the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien);

(d) Narrow the disparities between developed and developing countries;
(e) Encourage adult and family engagement in learning to promote total literacy for all people;
(f) Promote, together with literacy, life skills and scientific and technological knowledge and work towards an expansion of the definition of literacy, taking into account current targets and bench-marks.

Strategic objective B.3
Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education

Actions to be taken

82. By governments, in co-operation with employers, workers and trade unions, international and non-governmental organizations, including women's and youth organizations, and educational institutions:

(a) Develop and implement education, training and retraining policies for women, especially young women and women re-entering the labour market, to provide skills to meet the needs of a changing socio-economic context for improving their employment opportunities;
(b) Provide recognition to non-formal educational opportunities for girls and women in the education system;
(c) Provide information to women and girls on the availability and benefits of vocational training, training programmes in science and technology and programmes of continuing education;
(d) Design educational and training programmes for women who are unemployed in order to provide them with new knowledge and skills that will enhance and broaden their employment opportunities, including self-employment, and development of their entrepreneurial skills;
(e) Diversify vocational and technical training and improve access for and retention of girls and women in education and vocational training in such fields as science, mathematics, engineering, environmental sciences and technology, information technology and high technology, as well as management training;

(f) Promote women's central role in food and agricultural research, extension and education programmes;
(g) Encourage the adaptation of curricula and teaching materials, encourage a supportive training environment and take positive measures to promote training for the full range of occupational choices of non-traditional careers for women and men, including the development of multidisciplinary courses for science and mathematics teachers to sensitize them to the relevance of science and technology to women's lives;
(h) Develop curricula and teaching materials and formulate and take positive measures to ensure women better access to and participation in technical and scientific areas, especially areas where they are not represented or are underrepresented;
(i) Develop policies and programmes to encourage women to participate in all apprenticeship programmes;
(j) Increase training in technical, managerial, agricultural extension and marketing areas for women in agriculture, fisheries, industry and business, arts and crafts, to increase income-generating opportunities, women's participation in economic decision making, in particular through women's organizations at the grass-roots level, and their contribution to production, marketing, business, and science and technology;
(k) Ensure access to quality education and training at all appropriate levels for adult women with little or no education, for women with disabilities and for documented migrant, refugee and displaced women to improve their work opportunities.

Strategic objective B.4
Develop non-discriminatory education and training

Actions to be taken

83. By governments, educational authorities and other educational and academic institutions:

(a) Elaborate recommendations and develop curricula, textbooks and teaching aids free of gender-based stereotypes for all levels of education, including teacher training, in association with all concerned – publishers, teachers, public authorities and parents' associations;

(b) Develop training programmes and materials for teachers and educators that raise awareness about the status, role and contribution of women and men in the family, as defined in paragraph 29 above, and society; in this context, promote equality, co-operation, mutual respect and shared responsibilities between girls and boys from pre-school level onward and develop, in particular, educational modules to ensure that boys have the skills necessary to take care of their own domestic needs and to share responsibility for their household and for the care of dependents;

(c) Develop training programmes and materials for teachers and educators that raise awareness of their own role in the educational process, with a view to providing them with effective strategies for gender-sensitive teaching;

(d) Take actions to ensure that female teachers and professors have the same opportunities as and equal status with male teachers and professors, in view of the importance of having female teachers at all levels and in order to attract girls to school and retain them in school;

(e) Introduce and promote training in peaceful conflict resolution;

(f) Take positive measures to increase the proportion of women gaining access to educational policy- and decision-making, particularly women teachers at all levels of education and in academic disciplines that are traditionally male-dominated, such as the scientific and technological fields;

(g) Support and develop gender studies and research at all levels of education, especially at the postgraduate level of academic institutions, and apply them in the development of curricula, including university curricula, textbooks and teaching aids, and in teacher training;

(h) Develop leadership training and opportunities for all women to encourage them to take leadership roles both as students and as adults in civil society;

(i) Develop appropriate education and information programmes with due respect for multilingualism, particularly in conjunction with the mass media, that make the public, particularly parents, aware of the importance of non-discriminatory education for children and the equal sharing of family responsibilities by girls and boys;

(j) Develop human rights education programmes that incorporate the gender dimension at all levels of education, in particular by encouraging higher education institutions, especially in their

graduate and postgraduate juridical, social and political science curricula, to include the study of the human rights of women as they appear in United Nations conventions;

(k) Remove legal, regulatory and social barriers, where appropriate, to sexual and reproductive health education within formal education programmes regarding women's health issues;

(l) Encourage, with the guidance and support of their parents and in co-operation with educational staff and institutions, the elaboration of educational programmes for girls and boys and the creation of integrated services in order to raise awareness of their responsibilities and to help them to assume those responsibilities, taking into account the importance of such education and services to personal development and self-esteem, as well as the urgent need to avoid unwanted pregnancy, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, and such phenomena as sexual violence and abuse;

(m) Provide accessible recreational and sports facilities and establish and strengthen gender-sensitive programmes for girls and women of all ages in education and community institutions and support the advancement of women in all areas of athletics and physical activity, including coaching, training and administration, and as participants at the national, regional and international levels;

(n) Recognize and support the right of indigenous women and girls to education and promote a multicultural approach to education that is responsive to the needs, aspirations and cultures of indigenous women, including by developing appropriate education programmes, curricula and teaching aids, to the extent possible in the languages of indigenous people, and by providing for the participation of indigenous women in these processes;

(o) Acknowledge and respect the artistic, spiritual and cultural activities of indigenous women;

(p) Ensure that gender equality and cultural, religious and other diversity are respected in educational institutions;

(q) Promote education, training and relevant information programmes for rural and farming women through the use of affordable and appropriate technologies and the mass media – for example, radio programmes, cassettes and mobile units;

(r) Provide non-formal education, especially for rural women, in order to realize their potential with regard to health, micro-enterprise, agriculture and legal rights;

(s) Remove all barriers to access to formal education for pregnant adolescents and young mothers, and support the provision of child care and other support services where necessary.

Strategic objective B.5
Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms

Actions to be taken

84. By governments:

(a) Provide the required budgetary resources to the education sector, with reallocation within the education sector to ensure increased funds for basic education, as appropriate;
(b) Establish a mechanism at appropriate levels to monitor the implementation of educational reforms and measures in relevant ministries, and establish technical assistance programmes, as appropriate, to address issues raised by the monitoring efforts.

85. By governments and, as appropriate, private and public institutions, foundations, research institutes and non-governmental organizations:

(a) When necessary, mobilize additional funds from private and public institutions, foundations, research institutes and non-governmental organizations to enable girls and women, as well as boys and men on an equal basis, to complete their education, with particular emphasis on under-served populations;
(b) Provide funding for special programmes, such as programmes in mathematics, science and computer technology, to advance opportunities for all girls and women.

86. By multilateral development institutions, including the World Bank, regional development banks, bilateral donors and foundations:

(a) Consider increasing funding for the education and training needs of girls and women as a priority in development assistance programmes;

(b) Consider working with recipient governments to ensure that funding for women's education is maintained or increased in structural adjustment and economic recovery programmes, including lending and stabilization programmes.

87. By international and intergovernmental organizations, especially the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, at the global level:

(a) Contribute to the evaluation of progress achieved, using educational indicators generated by national, regional and international bodies, and urge governments, in implementing measures, to eliminate differences between women and men and boys and girls with regard to opportunities in education and training and the levels achieved in all fields, particularly in primary and literacy programmes;
(b) Provide technical assistance upon request to developing countries to strengthen the capacity to monitor progress in closing the gap between women and men in education, training and research, and in levels of achievement in all fields, particularly basic education and the elimination of illiteracy;
(c) Conduct an international campaign promoting the right of women and girls to education;
(d) Allocate a substantial percentage of their resources to basic education for women and girls.

Strategic objective B.6
Promote lifelong education and training for girls and women

Actions to be taken

88. By governments, educational institutions and communities:

(a) Ensure the availability of a broad range of educational and training programmes that lead to ongoing acquisition by women and girls of the knowledge and skills required for living in, contributing to and benefiting from their communities and nations;
(b) Provide support for child care and other services to enable mothers to continue their schooling;

(c) Create flexible education, training and retraining programmes for lifelong learning that facilitate transitions between women's activities at all stages of their lives.

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The booklet

This booklet is intended as a resource for knowledge, guidance, and inspiration for planners and policy-makers concerned with reducing disparities in education between genders.

The booklet begins by noting the contributions of educated women to their society. Then it describes the various educational conditions facing women and men, presents a brief account of the factors that bring about educational change, and refers specifically to the strong international support in favour of women and women's education. It offers specific recommendations in areas crucial to the schooling process, and continues focusing on roles and strategies that should be considered by those in a position to influence educational directions.

The reader will find various kinds of advice in this booklet on how to go about reducing disparities – from institutional strategies to steps that can be taken at the micro-social level by individuals. The heterogeneity of the points of intervention and the range of actors identified as potential change actors arise from the need to act comprehensively and pervasively on the education system and its environment.

The author

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